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ISSUE 7 £2.95 NOVEMBER 1991

FROM THE MAKERS OF *AMIGA FORMAT*, A MAGAZINE WITH *ATTITUDE*

AMIGA POWER

BITMAPPED BROTHERS

The Blues Bros Could this be the best character licence *ever*?

WHAT CAR?

THREE GREAT RACING GAMES – BUT WHICH ONE IS BEST?

SLICKEST **Formula One Grand Prix**

BIGGEST **OutRun Europa**

FASTEST **Lotus II**

LOOK! AMIGA POWER DISK 7

WANT TO KNOW MORE? THEN FLICK TO PAGE 5! →

LEANDER

EXCLUSIVE playable preview level of Psygnosis' brand new Japanese-style arcade adventure thingie!

PD

SUPER TWINTRIS

The BEST version of Tetris ever seen on the Amiga!

ASTEROIDS

ARCADE PERFECT conversion of the classic coin-op

VIDEOKID

Your first chance to see Gremlin's BIZARRE new shoot-'em-up in this exculsive playable preview!

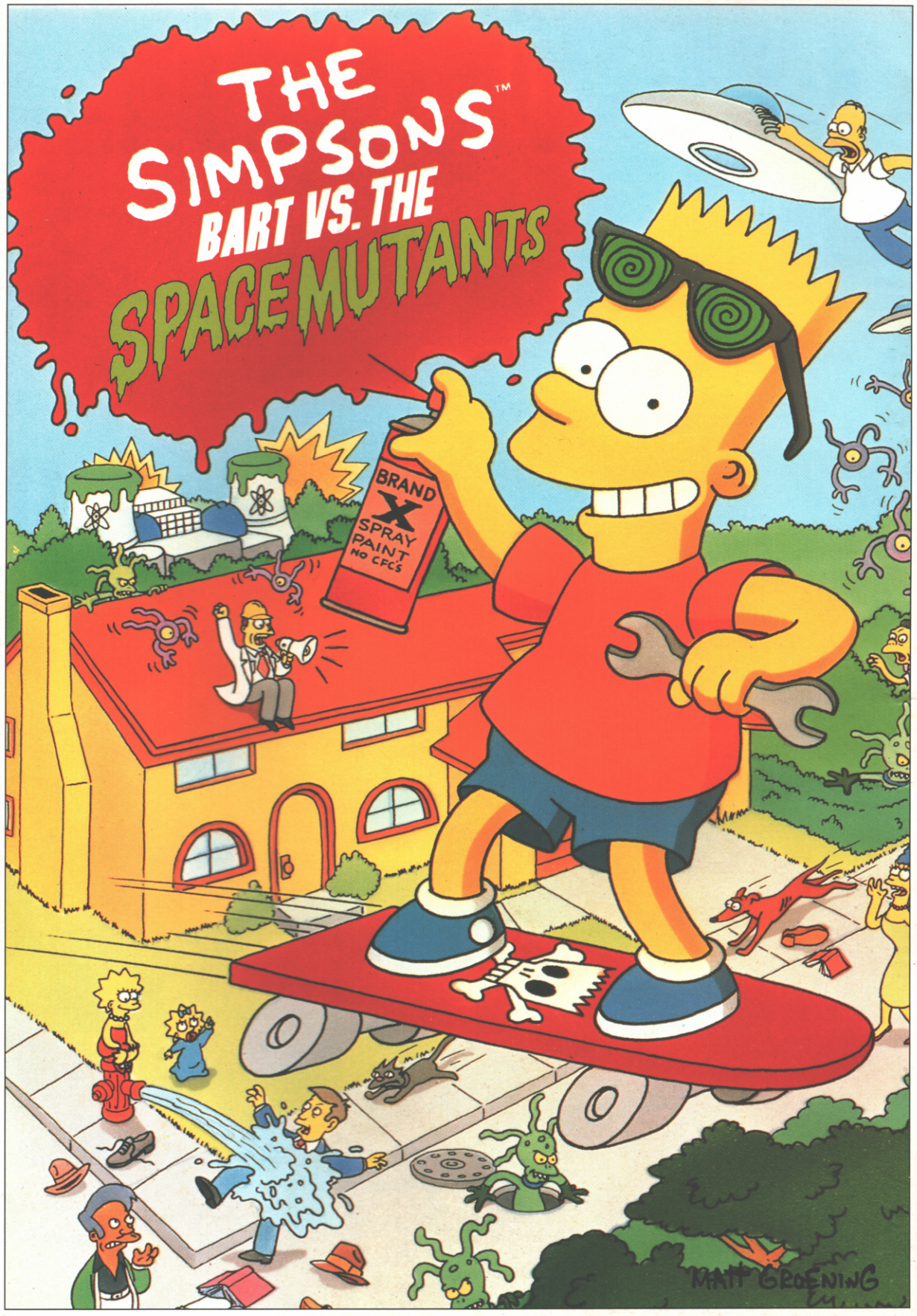
TIPPED: Mega lo Mania, Populous and loads more!

PLUS: THE WORLD OF COMMODORE

AMIGA FORMAT presents World of Commodore

Everything you ever wanted to know about the year's best show!

ISSUE 7



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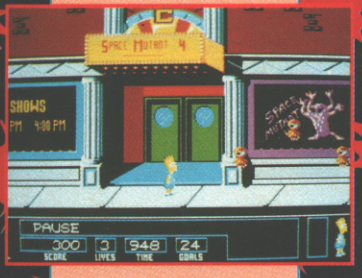
PLAY THE GAME MAN!



Hello **fellow humans!**
Bartholomew J. Simpson here, with a very important secret:

SPACE MUTANTS ARE INVADING SPRINGFIELD

That's right man! A buncha slimy, horrible, totally gross and putrid monsters are taking over the bodies of the people who live here and they wanna build a weapon that's gonna take over the entire planet!
PReTTy CoOL, HUh?
Anyway, yours truly is the only one who can see 'em! I've gotta spray-paint things, get radical on my skateboard, use my trusty slingshot, and in general behave like a nuisance, man.
Plus, with evil dudes like Nelson the bully and Sideshow Bob getting in my way, it's a good thing I've got the rest of the Simpsons to help me out!
So if you're a decent person a patriot, and somebody who cares about this sorry planet, you'll do the right thing.

SAVE THE EARTH

BUy THiS GaME!
Thanks man.

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THIS IS AMIGA POWER

AMIGA POWER

ISSUE SEVEN NOV 1991

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Thanks to: Vincent at Titus & the world's car insurance companies (the basts).

COMPETITION WINNER: At time of writing we hadn't had too many entries for the 'Famous people who look like members of the AMIGA POWER team' compo, so we'll keep it open for another month. Remember: make 'em funny!
THIS MONTH'S COMPO: Not quite sure if we're going to get any entries for this one, but here we go... What we want are pictures of naked people. We don't care how you get them or who they are – you can clip them from magazines, take pictures of your own family and friends (or even yourself), draw them, anything. Young, old, male, female – all they have to be is nude! The best one (or ones if we get lots of goodies) win(s) a bundle of free games.
WE'VE BEEN LISTENING TO: Amiga Format readers will know they tell you what obscure records they've been listening to every month in the office. Here's the (rather more obvious) AMIGA POWER playlist: Ice-T, Harry Connick Jnr, Rolling Stones, Godfathers, Teenage Fanclub, Elvis, Clash, Morrisey, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Cyndi Lauper... (Hip? I don't think so!)

AMIGA POWER comes to you from Future Publishing, hotbed of intrigue and home of Britain's biggest (and best!) 'leisure' computing magazines. There's Amiga Format, Amiga Shopper, ST Format, Your Sinclair, Commodore Format, Amstrad Action, New Computer Express, Sega Power, PC Plus, PC Answers, Public Domain, PC Format and 8000 Plus on the computing side, Classic CD, Needlecraft and Mountain Biking UK on the 'other'.

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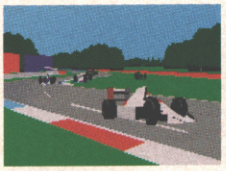

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It's going to be quite simply the biggest and best Amiga show ever held in this country, and far and away the greatest show of the year. There's nothing else for it – you've simply got to go, and here we explain the hows, wheres, whens and whys.

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OVER 300
GAMES RATED IN EVERY ISSUE!

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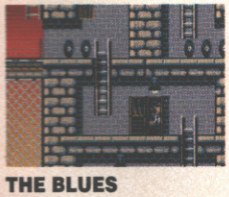

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disk SEVEN

One sunny day deep in the heart of the Fairy Kingdom, as the fluffy bunny rabbits frolicked in the glade and the little birdies twittered happily in the branches of the Magic Smarties Tree, a terrible, terrible sound was heard. Gerald Sick was force-feeding bricks to Billy The Badger.

"Poor Billy!", exclaimed a passing Sammy Squirrel to Beryl Hedgehog, "Whatever can be the reason for all this horrid and senseless brutality?"

"Well", said Beryl, "Gerald's really upset with Billy because he forgot to go to the shops and get Gerald's copy of AMIGA POWER Issue Seven. He's extra angry because he really had his heart set on playing some of the particularly fab and groovy demos and PD games which were on the coverdisk this month."

"Like what?", enquired Sammy.

"Ooh, now, there was a playable section of Psygnosis' new princess-rescuing epic *Leander*, and a taster of Gremlin's unusual forthcoming shoot-'em-up *Video Kid*. If I remember rightly, Gerald was especially looking forward to the brilliant PD Tetris game *Super Twintris* which is apparently the best Amiga version of the game yet – including the commercial releases – along with a completely perfect conversion of the ancient *Asteroids* coin-op, which some excitable members of the AMIGA POWER staff have been hailing as the best PD game ever", replied Beryl.

"Blimey", opined Sammy, "I'm not surprised Gerald's a touch miffed. Mind you, it still seems a bit harsh, what with the bricks and all."

"Ah well", said Beryl, "he also hates badgers."

AND THIS IS DISK SEVEN

LEANDER

Leander (it means 'Lion man' in Latin, mythology fans) is a big new project from Psygnosis. The full game is a 22-level monster set over three worlds where your hero has to save a princess from the evil Lord Thanatos, battling against all manner of hideous creatures, but this version gives you the first sizeable level to hack through.

VIDEO KID

This newie from Twilight & Gremlin stars yet another precocious kid in an unlikely surreal scenario. This time the little love's fallen into his video and must battle through five worlds based on classic movie styles. This playable demo brings you a section of blasting from the cowboy level as a taster of the real game's 200-odd screens.

SUPER TWINTRIS

This is the first time anyone has come close to emulating the incredible *Tetris* gameplay of the Game Boy, Spectrum or coin-op versions. This PD effort trounces full-price attempts, and features a simultaneous two-player mode like the arcade machine's. A selection of tunes and difficulty levels puts the icing on this PD cake, and it's all free!

ASTEROIDS

For many people it's the greatest arcade game of all time, and it's seen dozens of attempts made to capture it's glory in the PD sector. This, though, is the real thing, the definitive article, the absolute business, the bona fide coin-op experience. We've had a team of experts on the case for days, and they haven't found a single difference between this and the arcade original. If you liked *Amigoids*, this will change your life...

What's that? You want to know MORE? What do you think this is, the Encyclopaedia Britannica or something? Oh, alright then, turn the page for the complete lowdown...

disk SEVEN

READ THIS!

1. Make sure you've got everything switched off, a mouse plugged into Joystick Port One and a joystick plugged into Joystick Port Two.
2. Insert your AMIGA POWER coverdisk into the internal drive and switch the power on.
3 Pretty soon a prompt screen will appear. Read what is has to say!
4. If you have a memory-expanded Amiga (1 meg or more), type 'n' followed by Return. If you have an ordinary unexpanded machine, type 'y', also followed by Return.
7. Wait another few seconds, and another menu will appear (it'll be a lot flashier if you've got a meg). Choose which game or demo you want to play and press the relevant function key (F1 to F4).

If there are more specific instructions required for a particular program, they'll be listed in the section for that game in these very pages. Oh, and by the way, leaving your disk in the drive at all times while playing is undoubtedly the smartest thing to do at all times.

IT DOESN'T WORK?

If you have problems loading any of the programs on the disk, there are a number of ways in which you can restore the full joy of the AMIGA POWER coverdisk to your life. Here are just a few of them.

1. You could try switching everything back off, removing all extraneous peripherals (ie everything except the mouse and joystick) from the machine and starting again.
2. If that doesn't work, it could be that the disk is corrupted. You're pretty much knackered at this point, but if you're feeling brave you can always have a go at repairing it with the Disk Doctor utility (It's found on the Workbench disk, and full instructions are in your manual). It probably won't help much, but you've got nothing to lose.
3. If you're still out of luck we can still help. Just bung the offending article (and the disk, too) in a jiffy bag along with a stamped addressed envelope (and if you're in a really helpful mood, tell us your machine set-up as well), and sling the whole thing off to:

AMIGA POWER Disk Seven Returns
Disk Copy Labs plc, Unit A, West March, London Road, Daventry NN4 4SA

They'll send you a pristine and lovely new copy just as quickly as they possibly can.

LEANDER

Publisher: Psygnosis
Authors: Andy Ingram and Jon Burton

They've had a pretty quiet time of things lately (with only *Armour-Geddon* and *Atomino* keeping their name in the public eye), but Psygnosis look set to come back with a bang this Christmas. One of the games they hope to be banging with is *Leander*, a *Shadow-Of-The-Beast*-meets-*Gods* platform epic with all the usual stufff we've come to expect from the Psyggies – lush parallax scrolling, silky smooth animation, bags of atmosphere, Roger Dean-inspired graphics, quite unnecessarily lavish music, and ooh, everything but the proverbial kitchen sink really. And don't the kids just love 'em?

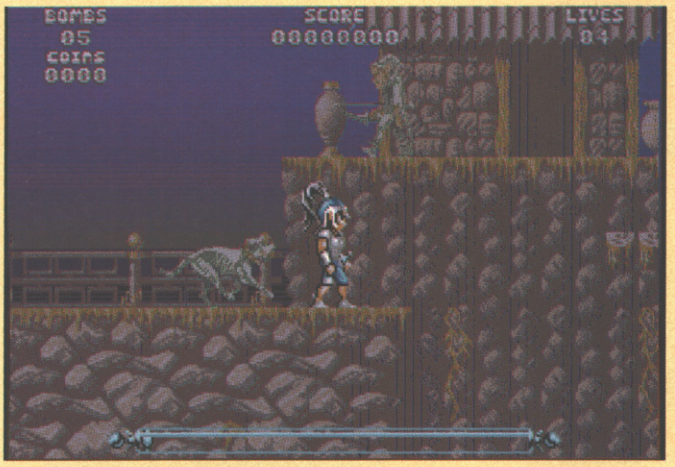
SO WHAT'S THE PLOT LIKE, THEN?

Well, you're this knight, right, and you've got this princess to rescue, right, and there're all these dragons and elves and things trying to stop you, right, and – I'm not boring you at all, am I?

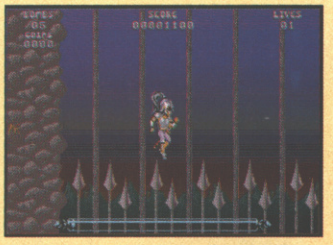
OKAY, SO NEVER MIND THE, ER, STORYLINE – HOW DO I PLAY IT?

Questions, questions, life is just one long series of questions. *Leander* is played in much the way you'd expect of this sort of thing. You run, jump and duck around a fantasy-style landscape, slashing at evil baddies with your sword/axe thing and picking up the money which they tend to drop when you kill them (although quite what a wolf is doing walking about with 50 gold pieces in his pocket is anyone's guess). Mind you, you might as well not bother in this demo version, since the shop sequence isn't included and all the money in the world won't be any use to you. (Look, tell you what, just pretend, okay? If you're not prepared to enter into the spirit of the thing, we might as well all go home now).

So you're bounding around, hacking away and collecting gold, but some of those baddies are just a little too tuff for you. In that case, what you need is a superblast weapon of some kind. Luckily, just such a thing has been provided, and you can activate it by crouching down and holding the fire button. A needle will move quickly along the meter at the bottom of the screen, and when it reaches the end (the meter will go all wobbly at this point to signify the fact), release the fire button and a huge, nay, enormous explosion will wipe out any unpleasant creatures currently visible on screen. Don't relax though – in common with enemies killed normally, superblasted enemies will reincarnate after about six seconds or so, so get out of there quickly. And in the well-worn words of the prophet, that's about it. You'll meet all manner of malevolent mutants on your journey through this demo, but all of them are vulnerable to repeated thrusts with your chopper, so get out there and get chopping. Elves and dragons, eh? Asking for it, the whole bloody lot of them!



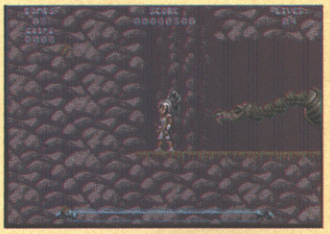
Oblivious to danger, *Leander* falls victim to an unmuzzled pit bull terrier.



Oops. Not surprisingly, landing on spikes is dangerous for your health.

OI! WHAT ABOUT THE CHESTS?

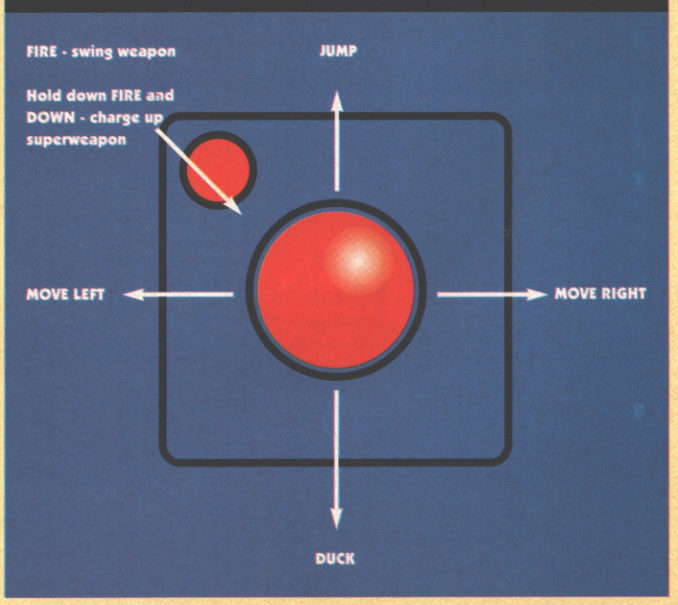
Oops, nearly forgot about the chests. Scattered liberally around the landscape you'll also find various chests. Give 'em a few good hard goings-over with your weapon and they'll burst open spectacularly, revealing an extra life or something of a similarly useful nature.



Don't look now, lion man, but someone green and scaly wants to say hi...

Leaping into the jaws of danger. (Leander doesn't know the meaning of fear).

LEANDER CONTROLS



Here you are, right at the start. Fifty seconds of cleaning up the West start here.

Notice the large ball rotating around our Kid – it'll bash any baddies who get too close.

Back To The Future fans will appreciate the cardboard cut-out nasties who pop up from here.

VIDEO KID

Publisher: Gremlin
Authors: Twilight

Okay, who's in the mood for another classic computer game plot? Well, tough, you're getting one anyway. *Video Kid* stars you – yes, you! – as the eponymous hero, a character who spends his entire life plonked in front of the TV watching videos. One day he gets a new VCR, and while vegetating harmlessly, Video Kid suddenly finds himself pulled inside! Not only that, but instead of the chips and recording heads and bits of circuit and so on he might expect to come across, VK has to battle his way through five huge levels of shoot-'em-up action, all based on classic movie settings. There's a western level, a sci-fi world, a horror stage and so on, but what they all have in common is that they're full of baddies. And we all know what to do with baddies, don't we? That's right, we blow them away!

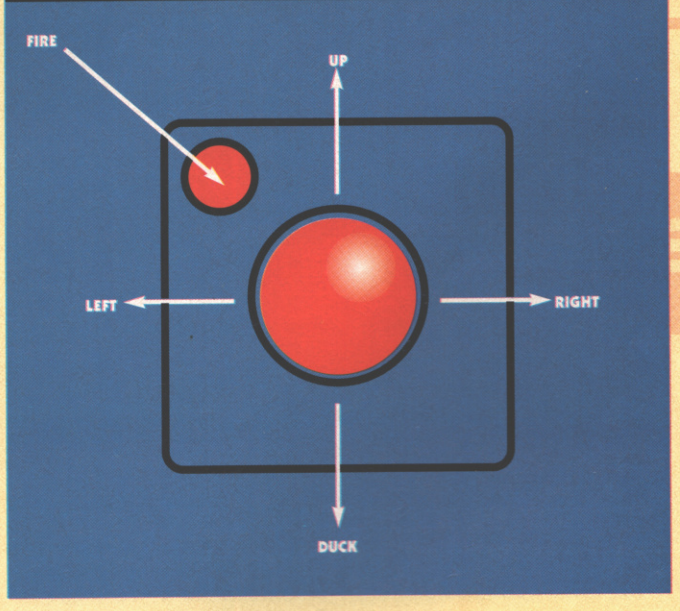
The demo on the disk this month contains a 50-second snatch of the first level of the full game, the western section. Your job couldn't be simpler – in fact, you don't really have one. All you have to do is fly around in the usual eight directions and shoot everything which appears on screen.

Occasionally a little bubble will float along from the right hand edge containing a power-up which you can collect (shooting the bubble changes the contents, which include three-way forward fire, sideways fire and bombs), but otherwise there's nothing at all complicated to worry about. Don't worry about dying or anything like that, 'cos your 50 seconds will undoubtedly run out before your lives do, just admire the beautiful graphics (from the same team who brought you US Gold's M*ega Twins*, reviewed elsewhere in this issue) and blast away.

Note: We've come across some problems loading *Video Kid* on some – but only some – one meg upgraded Amigas. Don't worry though, there's a quick and easy way to get round this. When loading the disk, simply use the alternative 512K menu instead of the meg one – everything should work perfectly.

'Go VCR'! Another video life bites the dust for the Video Kid – his town just isn't big enough for the kid AND the video nasties.

VIDEO KID CONTROLS



I don't know how he managed it with no enemies in sight, but *Video Kid*'s somehow got himself killed here.

Some baddies are too cowardly to even show their faces, and just shoot at you from the safety of their windows. Jessies.

As you can see, Kid's collected three-way spread fire from one of the power-up bubbles.

Don't look up at this point, or a dark cloud will descend on your fun...

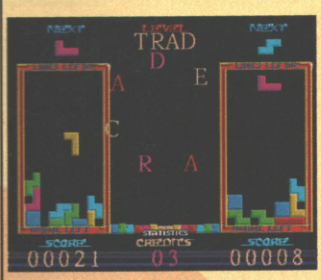
disk SEVEN

AMIGA POWER PRESENTS THE BEST OF PD

SUPER TWINTRIS

Authors: Big Brother Copy (BBC)

Okay, so we're always wittering on in the PD column about how such-and-such a PD version of *Tetris* is better than either of the commercial efforts, but until now you've only had our word for it. Now, at last, you can see for yourself. This clone improves on both the earlier games in several ways, the most dramatic of which is probably the provision for a two-player game in the style of the arcade machine. Also included are a couple of skill levels and various in-game tunes, plus all the same old stuff you'd expect from a *Tetris* game, like coloured blocks and, er, different-coloured blocks.



A PD *Tetris* which (like its arcade counterpart) takes the concept one stage further. *Super Twintris* offers twice the fun.

HOW TO PLAY

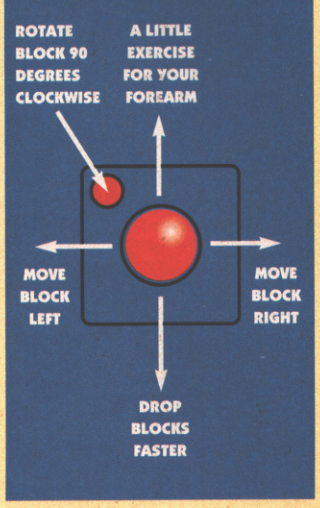
Just in case you're that one person who's been living in Transylvania since 1968 who magazines always explain all the really simple games that everyone else already knows perfectly well how to play to, here are the basic rules of *Tetris*. A random series of coloured blocks in one of seven shapes falls slowly (or not-so-slowly if you're in hard mode) from the top of the screen.

Your objective is to slide and turn the blocks so that they join up at the bottom to form complete lines. When this happens, all the blocks in that line disappear, allowing all the ones above to drop down a level.

If you mess up and leave gaps, the pile of blocks will gradually rise higher and higher until it finally reaches the top of the screen, at which point the game is over.

It's as simple as that, really, except for a few little tricks. For one, if you're happy with the positioning of a block, you can pull down on the joystick to make it fall down the screen faster. Also, when a block hits the bottom, you can still rotate it or quickly slide it sideways, in order to fit it in underneath an overhanging edge. And finally, if you complete more than one line at once, you'll get lots more points and also a really cute earthquake effect onscreen. For real drama (and serious points), complete four lines at once by using one of the long red blocks. And that's really just about it. Have fun!

CONTROLS



ASTEROIDS

Author: Kris Schulte

Designed by Atari's Ed Logg (a clever chap who's still designing coin-ops to this day) in 1979, *Asteroids* was (and remains) one of the most original ideas ever seen in an arcade. The basic concept couldn't be simpler – pilot your small ship through a field of moving space rocks by blasting them to dust with your laser, but the clean, sharp vector graphics, incredibly flexible control system, and never-ending challenge instantly made it a classic. Indeed, there are many arcade veterans who'll still tell you this is the best video game ever made.

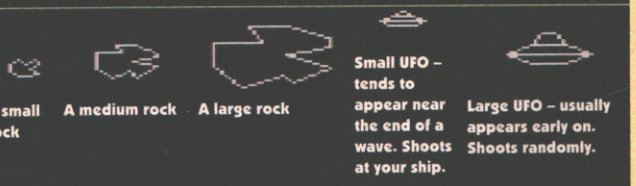
Many, many programmers have tried to capture the incredible addictiveness and playability over the years on every machine imaginable, but this version by German coder Kris Schulte is, quite literally, perfect. Now that's a word which has been used before until its meaning has become diluted, but take it seriously this time. The graphics, sound, gameplay, even the relative positioning of the keys – everything is right. But enough history, there are probably loads of you out there who've never even seen an *Asteroids* machine (1979 was, after all, a long time ago), so here's the story.

GET YOUR ROCKS OFF

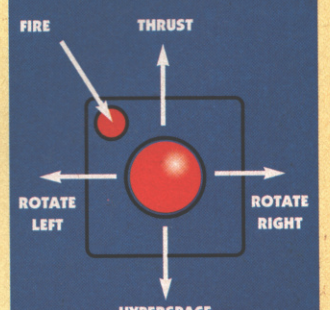
In *Asteroids*, there are only two dangers. You can be run down by the asteroids themselves, or you can be shot or rammed by either of two alien UFOs who fly onto the screen at irregular intervals. You avoid these dangers by spinning your ship around on the spot and shooting, by thrusting out of the way, or, in dire emergencies, by using hyperspace. This flips you instantly to a random position on the screen, but beware. Roughly one time in every four, hyperspacing will cause your ship to explode on re-entry, killing you. So far so easy, but what makes *Asteroids* so tricky is that when you shoot a rock it doesn't disappear – if it's a large or medium-sized one it splits into two instead, giving you twice as many obstacles to avoid, each smaller and harder to hit than the original one. Also (and this is where it gets really sneaky), the asteroids can be broken up by stray shots from the UFOs, giving you a whole load of extra trouble just when you didn't expect it.

So what can you do? Well, as well as shooting, thrusting and hyperspacing, you can move and fire across the edges of the screen (ie fly off the right side and you'll reappear at the left), which can be invaluable in dealing with the UFOs. Why? Because their shots have only a limited range, and they can't fire behind the screen like you, so you can lurk at the opposite side and fire at them safely using wraparound shots while remaining out of their range! Other smart tactics you can work out for yourself, but one thing's for sure – you won't beat *Asteroids* in a hurry!

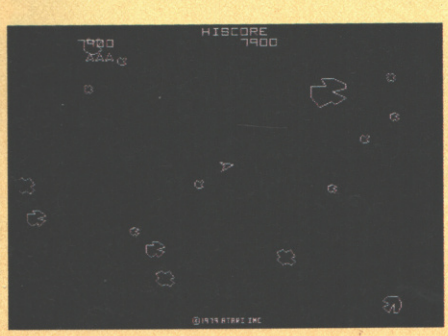
KNOW YOUR ENEMIES



CONTROLS

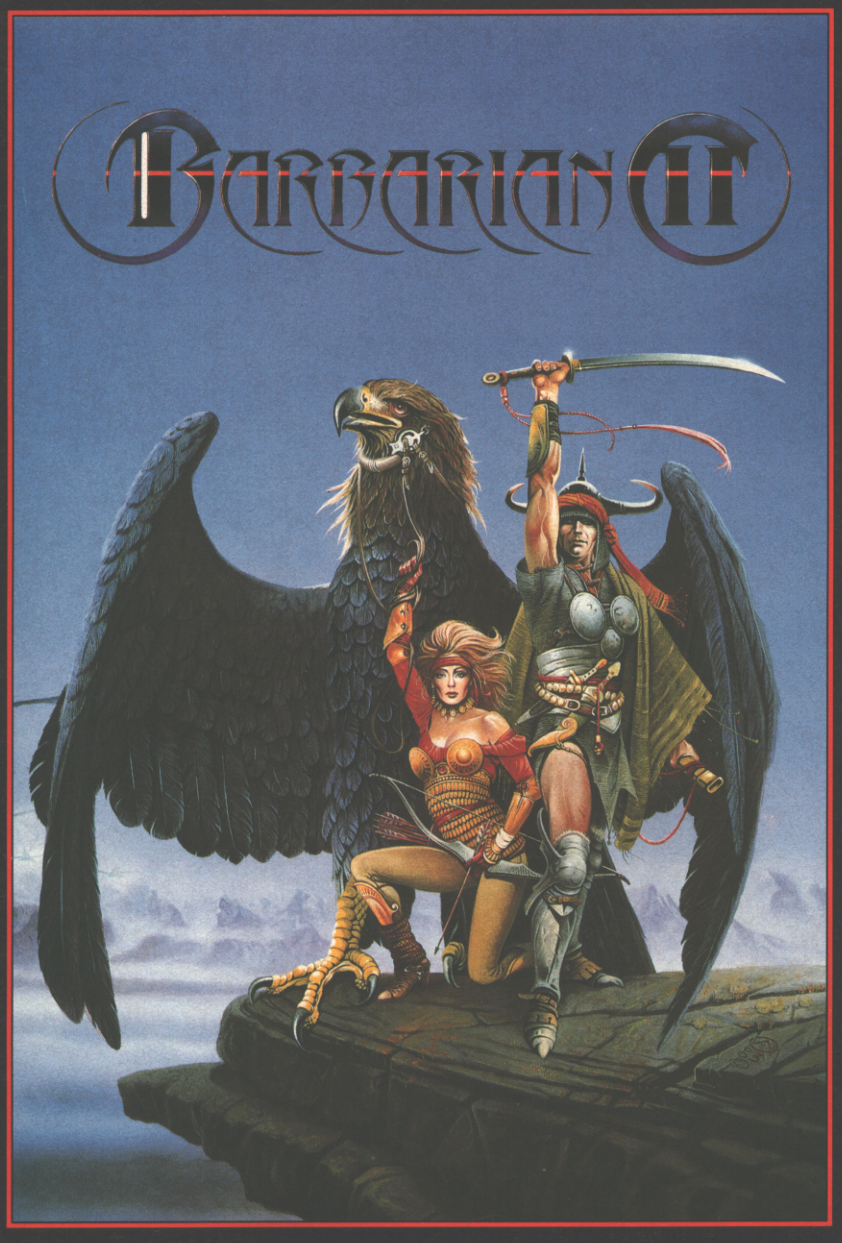


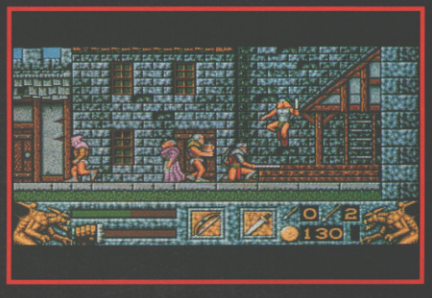
OR
. - THRUST
Z - ROTATE LEFT
X - ROTATE RIGHT
SPACEBAR - HYPERSPACE
/ - FIRE
A TO CHANGE CREDIT LINE IN BOTH CASES



Accurate right down to the Atari copyright sign, *Asteroids* is the real test of skill for any arcade junkie. There's not a single facet of the original missing from this PD interpretation.

Warning: AMIGA POWER tests have shown that *Asteroids* may take over your life.





BARBARIAN II

Necron's back in town and he wants revenge. Only you – in the guise of Hegor the Barbarian – have the courage, strength and stupidity to face the challenge:

It's time once again to don your dented helmet, tie your sweaty breechcloth, sharpen your rusting sword and move your big feet in the direction of danger.

Forests, caves, dungeons, castles and temples await your barbaric exploration, each is infested with deadly inhabitants and devious traps ready to terminate your lowbrow activities.

Featuring 2,000 frames of sprite animation, 32 colours on-screen, parallax scrolling, 6 levels of continuous arcade/adventure action, over 1 megabyte of fully-animated sprites, 50 divergent enemies, Magic & Health Potions to help you on your quest and a plethora of unique weapons to find and use. **Barbarian II** is:

The ultimate in loincloth entertainment.

Screen Shots from the Amiga version

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TRUE STORIES

RAINBOW ISLANDS, YOUR TIME IS UP!

The follow-up to *Rainbow Islands* is coming! Cuter even than *Rodland*, *Parasol Stars* may just turn out to be the new AMIGA POWER number one!

Parasol Stars, the sequel to AMIGA POWER's all time top game *Rainbow Islands*, is nearing completion, and we can safely say it looks destined to knock its predecessor off its perch.

Unlike *Rainbow Islands* and the first in the series, *Bubble Bobble*, this one didn't start life as a coin-op but as an original release for NEC's PC Engine console, though that doesn't make it a lesser game – not on the strength of what we've seen of it anyway. It's going to be published by Ocean, who've been behind all three *Bubble Bobble* games, and they're privately predicting the first non film or coin-op based Christmas number one since, well, since anyone can remember.

As you might have guessed from the title, Bub and Bob, our two cute little heroes from the first two games, now have a new weapon – multicoloured parasols (umbrellas) which they use to a) throw baddies, b) pick up collectable fruit (or whatever) to lob at the enemies or c) slow their descent when jumping off platforms. Gameplay is a sort of mix between *Bubble Bobble* and *Rainbow Islands* – each level is small(ish) and only a couple of screens across, but the sense of scale and style of your weaponry are much more reminiscent of the *Rainbow Island* outing.

From what we've seen the game plays as crisply as it looks from these ultra-bright graphics – and that's very crisply indeed – but we don't want to spoil the fun so we won't say anything else until the full review next issue...

Combining the cuteness of *Rainbow Islands* and the beautifully simple gameplay of *Bubble Bobble*, *Parasol Stars* could just be the best yet...

That parasol isn't much use for keeping rain at bay, not underwater anyway – you'd be better off bashing those nasties with it instead.

'OUR' NIGEL RETURNS

Formula One racing 'hero' Nigel Mansell is to appear in a high speed Amiga game, courtesy of Gremlin. The Sheffield team are understood to be discussing the finer points of a deal with Mansell's agents, with a view to releasing an *Indy 500* type driving game in '92. Three years ago Mansell was the central licence in a Martech race game which enjoyed moderate success on all formats. Unfortunately though, it doesn't look as if Gremlin will be able to flag their catch as world racing champion.

US GOLD GIVE UP ON ARCADE CONVERSIONS

They've been saying this for a while, but now it finally looks to be true – from next year the Birmingham software giants will be concentrating even more on their various foreign labels (Lucasfilm, Delphine, SSI) and odd bits of original product (*Cybercon III*, say) for the Amiga and leaving the CapCom and Sega licences to the likes of the Super FamiCom or Megadrive.

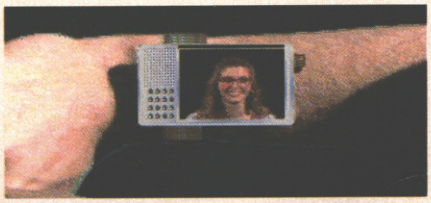
'After all,' said a reluctant-to-be-named spokesman, 'you have to admit that some arcade games just don't work on the home computers. If we do get around to doing any conversions next year, and we may not, it'll be the real cream only – things like *Street Fighter II* or *Sonic The Hedgehog*, if it ever becomes available. Otherwise were concentrating on the more mature, computer orientated products only.' And you can't say that it doesn't make perfect sense.

RAYMOND CHANDLER ON MARS

Access are probably best known as producers of top notch golfing games, such as the *Leaderboard* series and the forthcoming *Links*. Ahh, but times change, man cab't live by golf alone, and now the Salt Lake City team are working on altogether more other-worldly projects.

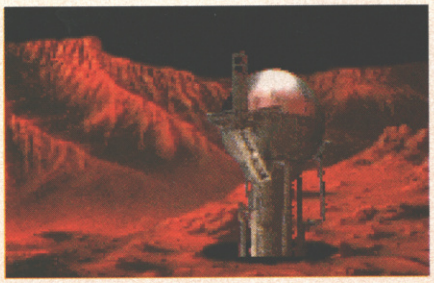
Take *Martian Memorandum*, a futuristic detective yarn, billed as being very much an 'interactive movie'.

We've seen a PC demo, and it certainly looks a treat (although it remains to be seen how successful its movie adventure style will be). It's a bit of a mix between *Casablanca* and *Total Recall* with the 'tec chasing across to Mars to track down a girl, while a totalitarian state and various other villains get in the way. Look for an arrival by the middle of next year.



***Martian Memorandum:* Interactive movie time with a Philip Marlowe type 'tec of the 21st Century (PC shown).**

The more things change... Even in the 21st century the detective always has to rescue a kidnapped girl.



Moving from the safety of Earth to the angry red planet, *Martian Memorandum* encompasses over fifty locations, each one beautifully drawn and animated.

CONAN'S IN A BAD MOOD

Blimey. Beefcake hero Conan has woken up with a bit of a headache, received a Poll Tax reminder, found out there's no milk in the fridge, and, to top it all off, his family have been massacred during the night by the ravening hordes of Thoth Amon. Time to lift implausibly large sword, and get down to slicing up some fantastic creatures.

Virgin's *Conan the Cimmerian* features 200 locations (taverns, dungeons, tombs – you know the kind of places) and lots of ugly bag guys who are just itching for a scrap. We're talking giant spiders, assassins, rogues and our old pals the venomous lizard rats here. You can change the mode of combat (ie your weapon) and there's a bit of strategy bunged in for good measure. It's out later this month priced £29.99.

WRESTLE MANIA

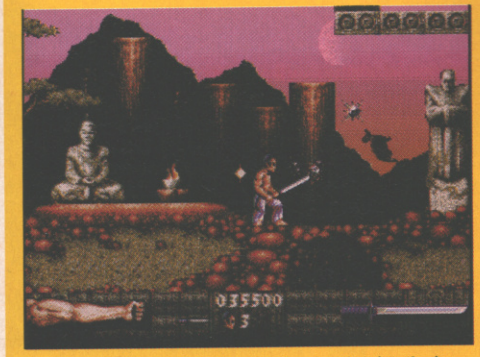
America's favourite bone-heads come to the Amiga in *World Wrestling Federation*, courtesy of Ocean. With a large play area, smooth scrolling and huge sprites, *WWF* could well be the first decent wrestling game to ever appear on a computer.

You've seen the adverts by now (you know, they're the ones with that hairy blonde bloke saying he's 'Comin to get yaaa!') and perhaps checked out the TV show on BSkyB – well, now here's the game. *WWF* (or *World Wrestling Federation*) is that madly theatrical American wrestling thing starring guys like Hulk Hogan (the bloke in the advert), 'Nature Boy' Ric Flair (motto:'You can like it or not like it but learn to love it because it's the best thing around'!), Sting, Sid Vicious (not the singers), Zed Man and Mr Perfect.

Ocean's game of the 'sport' puts the player in the spandex swimsuit of the Hulkster, Ultimate Warrior or British Bulldog while baddies include The Mounty, Warlord, Mr Perfect, Ted Dibiase and Sergeant Slaughter. Yes, there's no doubting *WWF* features some pretty colourful characters, and the large size of the scrolling ring gives the game plenty of space to breathe (neatly you can jump or be thrown out of the ring, the game continuing as long as you get back within a count of 20), but whether or not it rises above the traditional beat-'em-up problems (simply that straight one-on-one fighting is too limited to hold the interest for long) remains to be seen. That said, interest in the *WWF* is strong enough for the game, programmed by Twilight and released in November, to doubtless prove a fairly sizeable hit.

FIRST SAMURAI

Named as a little in-joke with ex-employers System 3 (whose *Last Ninja* series they helped create), John Twiddy, Mev Dinc and old 8-bit star Raf Cecco of Vivid Image have come up with one of the – if not simply *the* – most stunning Amiga arcade adventures ever. Graphics are gorgeous for a start, but special effects (always an AMIGA POWER fave but too rarely done well) and some great (and intuitive) combat moves really raise it above the norm. We don't want to say too much here, but the game – released within weeks with luck – looks set to be one of the high points of the year.



***First Samurai* is certainly visually stunning, but it's the in-game sound which really astounds. Awesome samples are played in sync with the actions of the samurai. It's now possible to create tunes, simply by hacking and slashing!**

COMPETITION

BE AN AMIGA POWER GAMES REVIEWER

Have you ever reckoned yourself as a games reviewer, but never had the chance to really have a go? Well, here's your opportunity. This month's we're having a weird competition where the prize is a place on the AMIGA POWER reviews team.

(This means that you get to play free games, write about them, get famous and get paid).

Here's the catch. If you can't string a few words together in a reasonably entertaining fashion, and if you don't know your *Rainbow Islands* from your *Monkey Island*, then you haven't a hope. If, however, you've got something worthwhile to say about games, then get writing. Don't worry too much about spelling and punctuation, this isn't a job application... we want people with opinions and angles.

Here's what you have to do. Just write a 100 word review on any of the games on this month's cover disk. Write it in your own style, but try and put it together as if it were to run in AMIGA POWER. That means sticking a Bottom Line at the end (but there's no need to worry about Uppers and Downers). For a good guide of what we're after, check out a few of the budget game reviews on page 90-92.

Here're the rules. All entries must be in by December 31st 1991. The editor's decision is final, and no correspondence can be entered into. And that, as they say, is it.

TOTAL CARNAGE, I LOVE IT!

The two player mayhem of *Smash TV* comes to the Amiga in glorious gore-o-vision. ZZKJ (of *Super Hang-On*) fame is handling conversion duties, so the results should be suitably fast and frantic. Graphically, things look pretty much identical to the arcade original.

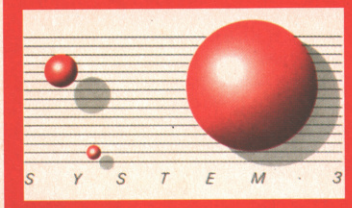
If there's been one coin-op the AMIGA POWER team have really been into this year, it's *Smash TV*. Why? Well, it's simple – for a start, the game is simply a series of single screen rooms, each one packed with an unfeasible number of baddies. You (or you and a chum) play contestants in a futuristic *Running Man*-style TV show, spending most of your time dashing around a large room, shooting everything you see and trying not to get shot (or otherwise got) by the baddies yourself.

Yes, if it sounds to you like an updated version of *Robotron*, you're exactly right – and that's where the game's real appeal come from. We've always been suckers for early arcade gameplay teamed with 1990s graphics, and this has proved to be one of the most successful combos to date.

What more can be said about it? Well, tons of power ups, oodles of baddies, and fifty rooms make for one of the most frantic games of the year, while a trio of huge end-of-level bad guys (some of whom can take up to 10 minutes to kill!) up the violence quota massively whenever they venture on screen. Perhaps the most impressive thing about Ocean's conversion is the way things don't slow down even when there are loads of (often quite large) baddies on screen at once, while the fact that the collectables lying around include VCRs, toasters and holidays adds to the TV quiz show humour. Look for a release in November and review, with luck, next issue – it promises to be a doozy.

CRIB SHEETS

It's time to lift the lid on another one of those top software publishing outfits. After much deliberation, this time we're quizzing...



SYSTEM 3

Contact: 18, Peterborough Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 2BQ.

History: Formed in 1983 by a youthful Mark Cale and two pals (hence the '3') they started off by writing some pretty cheesy games for the Atari. Then they moved onto the C64 and scored a huge hit with *International Karate*. Cale bought out his buddies before embarking on a doomed partnership with Activision. System 3 carried on releasing hit after hit on the 8-bits, and are now working hard on bringing their reputation to the ST and Amiga.

People: There are 20 full time staff at S3, 10 of whom actually work on developing games. The firm also calls upon a pool of 25 freelance graphic designers, sound people and programmers for work on their various projects.

Biggest successes: *Last Ninja*, *International Karate* and *IK+* have made System 3 the masters of martial arts beat-'em-ups. Oriental violence seems to be their forte, and no-one does it as well (or as much!) In 1986 *International Karate* was the first British game to go to number one in the US charts.

Biggest failures: A sales and marketing deal with Activision in 1989/90 went sour (for the usual business reasons). System 3 wanted out but were under obligation to write a couple more games for Activision– one of which was *Last Ninja II*. In the end Cale and his crew left Activision, who simply wrote *Ninja II* themselves and released it in System 3 packaging. It was not a success.

How they see themselves: Over to marketing manager (and boss's brother) Adrian Cale. "We're a designer label. We're not Ocean or US Gold, and we have to make sure our games are special. All our games (except the Activision ones) get 90 percent ratings in the magazines."

How other people see them. There's no doubting the quality of some of System 3's kit, but many people still view the team as wide boys. In days gone by Mark Cale could usually be found driving a Ferrarri, but ' this had less to do with flashness as a financial interest in exotic cars'. (Hem, hem).

What's coming next: Check out the preview of this year's remaining games on these very pages. Next year there's *Silly Putty* (which is very strange) and a god sim type thingy called *Constructor*.

System 3's most critically acclaimed release to date (by us anyway), *IK+* was the work of top Amiga programmer Archer Maclean.

SPINNING IN THE BRAIN

French publishers Titus are to make a late entry into the already-overcrowded cute puzzle game market with a – well, a cute puzzle game, really. It's called *The Brainies* and it looks not at all unlike a cross between Demonware's *The Power* and the classic Japanese puzzler *Soko Ban*. The object is to slide little fluffy critters around an obstacle-strewn course until they occupy specific spaces, but as you might expect, it's not as simple as that... The game is close to completion and it looks like a lot of fun, but you'll be able to find out for yourself in late October.

Cute-as-a-button puzzling in Titus' *The Brainies*.

DRIVIN' RANGE

Remember *Hard Drivin'*? Crap wasn't it? Well, now Domark are having another stab at high speed driving with the 'official' sequel to the top arcade coin-op.

This time we're promised none of the disappointing judderyness which marred the original conversion, nor the non-descript courses of the 'unofficial' sequel *Hard Drivin' II*. Steering control is also said to have been improved significantly so we're are banking on plenty of high speed action, nasty challenges and mad crash sequences.

Now there are two new tracks (Corkscrew Loop and Jump Loop) in addition to the original stunt and race tracks, and there's a wickedly obstreperous off-road course track...

***Race Drivin'*, as it's called, is programmed by Walking Circles and claimed to be "even faster" than Hard Drivin' – we're certainly hoping so. It's out late November, priced £24.99. Watch out for a full review next month.**

BUSY SYSTEM 3 GO ECLECTIC

Beat-'em-up moguls System 3 are lining up their most eclectic batch of releases yet. Aside from *Last Ninja III* (reviewed this issue) there's an arcade adventure, a racer-cum shoot-em-up, and a cute platformer. So what're they all about?

That crusty old 8-bit fave has been given a complete overhaul, but is it top 16-bit fare?

MYTH

If you owned an 8-bit machine a few years back, it's more than likely that you gave this arcade adventure a spin. It picked up awards throughout Europe for stunning graphics and excellent gameplay, and for at least a month it was undisputed king of 8-bit games. Now it's attempting to lure Amiga owners (but we're not so easily pleased as our 8-bit chums of yesteryear). Graphically, it's never going to affect Amiga owners as it did, say, the C64 community. It's pretty, but certainly not magnificent. That said, there are some well illustrated characters running around, plenty of plot and gameplay, and loads of clever little touches that weren't evident in the original.

Half the game is simple running, jumping and killing (in anything from two-way to eight-way scrolling) but to really progress you'll have to solve the necessary puzzles to dispose of those end of level guardians. Some will tax arcade adventurers to the limit, but the genre has been largely neglected of late, so that's no bad thing. The plot sticks closely to various mythological stories (hence the name) and there's everything here from Jason and the Argonauts to Odin and Valhalla. *Myth* will be arriving next month priced £25.99.

FUZZBALL

This could be the surprise hit of the winter. It's best described as a cross between *PacMan* and *Bombjack*, but much more challenging than either. It's all multi-level jumping, avoiding/killing beasties and collecting sweets and fruits. *Fuzzball* hails from an unknown pair of programmers from Denmark (apparently called John and Thomas); whoever they are, they've devised a game of nastily addictive qualities. There are plenty of *Mario*-esque touches like secret screens and amusing bad guys, and lots of that 'just one more go' feel bunged in. It's out next month priced £19.99.

PacMan mates with *Bombjack*, and the result is one strange baby by the name of *Fuzzball*.

Turbocharge joins the like of *Lotus II* and *OutRun Europa* in the Xmas games race.

TURBO CHARGE

Crafted in the *Chase HQ* mould of race and chase, *Turbocharge* takes you through a clutch of violent third world countries, chasing terrorists along the way.

Each level features two sub-sections – chasing the enemy through friendly territory, and then chasing the suckers through unfriendly territory. The best thing about *Turbocharge* is it's phenomenal speed. Landscape detail may be scanty, but who cares when you're zipping along at such a rate? Each country also has some darkly humorous graphical call-outs – while driving through Iraq you'll pass hoardings featuring Saddam Hussein's mug. Out by the end of the year, this doesn't look as pretty or accurate as *OutRun Europa* or *Lotus II*, but it could still prove to be bags of fun.

RPG FRENZY

Character assassination: Some of your pals are a bit emotional (to say the least), so you're best off not asking them to perform tasks unsuited to their personalities.

This is *Daemonsgate* (sic), Gremlin's much talked about role playing adventure due for release at the end of the year. It's being much talked about because Gremlin's only previous attempt at RPG was the decidedly middle brow *Hero Quest* which, while enormously successful, was a minnow of a game compared to this monster.

The plot is standard fare. Hordes of barbarians are camped outside your town, and they're getting in the mood for destruction, rape, pillage and other such larks. You control eight good guy characters of varying skills, each of whom has to overcome a multitude of problems and tasks.

As has become vogue, the characters are not only made up of statistical attributes and disadvantages, they also lead real lives. So, while you're not controlling someone, he'll go about his daily business in the usual fashion.

It's all set on the continent of Hestor, but most of the action takes place within each of the seven major cities in Hestor – each of these is 10,000 screens big featuring 400 characters who'll either get in your way, or bimble around in an everyday fashion. Yes, it's one of those games where lots of people are forever milling around... There's also plenty of combat, character interaction, magic spells and other fave RPG ingredients. All in all we reckon heavy-duty adventurers will go a bundle on this. Price is likely to be £35.

Out on the town: There are plenty of people to bump into in the urban scenes, though you might not want to (more than a few are looking to bump *you* off).

Shy.
Sensitive.
Law-abiding.
Polite.
Respectful.

BRUCE WILLIS
HUDSON HAWK

...I don't think so.

Now...
steal in on the game.

ocean®

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DESERT STORM

Flight sim fans will no doubt remember Digital Integration's early but influential *F-16 Combat Pilot* – one of the first games accurate enough to attract hardened aircraft fans, yet arcadey enough to work as a game. *Falcon* and the rest may have since past it by, but the game retains enough fans to promote interest in a 'sequel' – even if the new one turns out to be about a completely different aircraft! Based loosely on missions flown during the Gulf conflict, *Tornado* puts you in the pilot's seat of the famous RAF fighter-bomber – a plane currently ill-served by existing flight sims. Indeed, DI – in an reference to Hi Soft's over-complicated *ProFlight* Tornado game – say "we are aware of only one *Tornado* simulator presently on the market and it is by no means comprehensive or visually convincing."

From the sound of things – and what we've seen – *Tornado* will be hard to accuse of lack-of-comprehensiveness at any rate. With a new style of high density ground detail (apparently accurately modelled from maps and photographs) and lots of clever tricks – graduated horizon, 1:1 scaling of objects, ground object animation, multiple camera views and (wait for it) multiple cloud layers – to keep the most demanding flight simmer happy, we certainly expect it to be a game to cause a bit of a stir. You'll have to wait for it though – *Tornado* won't be passing this way until the middle of next year.

***Tornado*: More detail, more fun, better enemies, and the first graded sky on an Amiga flight sim.**

External views show just how advanced the 3D graphics routines are. Could this game be a successor to *F-15 Strike Eagle II*?

Oh dear...

The column that does for the software industry what Sweeney Todd did for hairdressing.

GAZZA'S SUPER SOCCER (Empire)

The biggest problem with this game, it must be said, is its title. To start with, there's 'Gazza'. Not only is it a thuggish and inelegant sounding word, but it's only got two 'z's in it. Believe us, this is a game with a LOT of 'z's in it...

Secondly, 'Super'. Our dictionary defines the word as 'outstanding; a product of superior quality', but if there's ever been a footy game that this is superior to, it must be a very sad affair indeed. (Then again, I daresay '*Gazza's Absolute-Nadir-Of-The-Genre-Since-The-Funny-Pong-Style-Game-You-Got-On-Those-Ancient-Binatone-TV-Games Soccer*' wouldn't have had quite the same commercial appeal.

It would have been a fraction too long for the box as well, probably). And lastly of course, you've got 'Soccer'. Or rather you haven't, not if you're playing this. This game bears as much resemblance to soccer as, ooh, a kangaroo or something. Have the Advertising Standards Authority been told?

There are other, smaller, problems too, though. The one everyone notices is the quite breathtakingly stupid mixed perspective, but the completely arbitrary tackling, stunningly unfriendly options screens and dreadfully unhelpful kick-strength meter shouldn't be forgotten, nor should the phenomenally cretinous commentator or the fact that you have to stand still to kick the ball properly. Or our personal favourite, the way that a full-strength kick from the centre section of the pitch goes for about 70 yards, but one from one of the end sections travels around nine feet or so.

This game is a pair of plastic breasts on the chest of the software business.

Here it goes, here it goes, here it goes – straight in the bin. (Ahem).

ANNOUNCING... THE AMIGA POWER SILT-SOFT QUIZ

It seems that this quiz will have to be renamed. Apparently the questions are proving too... obscure for some. Aah. Well, for the benefit of those sad sorts who don't know the meaning of ROCK-HARD, here are five SILT-SOFT questions to answer. As ever, there's a kudos point on offer for those capable of spotting the link between the answers – not that anyone deserves any.

1) Gremlin's follow-up to *Supercars*.
2) Gremlin's follow-up to *Switchblade*.
3) The Bitmap Brothers' follow-up to *Speedball*.
4) Rainbird's follow-up to *Starglider*.
5) Psygnosis' follow-up to *Shadow Of The Beast*.

The answers to this monolith of obscurity can be found over on page 17.

IT'S ... THE (REAL) AMIGA POWER ROCK-HARD QUIZ

So the Silt-Soft Quiz was a little too squelchy for your liking, eh? Well here are five questions for the real men (and women) out there...

1) It was a close shave, but Tiertex ensured that Sega's chopper was out in time for the Christmas of '87.
2) CapCom's light atmospheric disturbance, as converted by Software Creations.
3) A colourful conversion from Graftgold.
4) Ocean France have got the ball rolling for which cool Toaplan arcade hit?
5) Dan Gorlin's hero went in search of a sea child.

The Rock-Hard answers are also to be found on page 17.

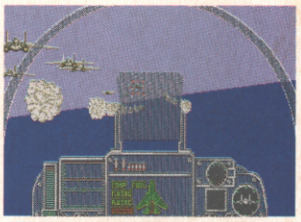
G-FORCE

Oh no! Someone's been stupid enough to try and convert *G-LOC*, Sega's sequel to arcade hit *Afterburner*, to the home computers! It's bound to be rubbish, isn't it? (After all, Activision's attempts at *Afterburner* and the similar *Galaxy Force* were pretty hopeless, weren't they?)

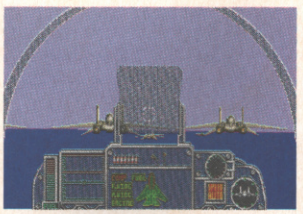
Well, yes to the *Afterburner/Galaxy Force* comments, but quite possibly no, not even slightly to our assumptions about *G-LOC*.

From what we've seen the game succeeds in being fast and smooth – something previous things in the same vein have never really pulled off – and large too, with 38 levels of varying degrees of difficulty. A good conversion then, by the look of things – any problems with the game look like they'll be those of the original coin-op.

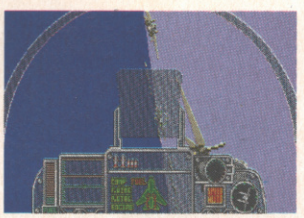
After all, it's a common complaint that arcade games in the *Afterburner* mould tend to be fast and impressive, but ultimately fairly uncontrollable, and it's difficult to see how you can make it any different on the home screen...



Although the ground detail is still missing, this early version of *G-LOC* is remarkably smooth – the planes swooping around elegantly.



Closing in for the kill with the finger right on that missile trigger. The enemy craft sometimes get frighteningly close. Loosing a missile soon dispels any fears though.



Taking some major evasive action, those enemy aircraft just keep on coming. Even this early demo is instantly recognisable as *G-LOC*.

RACK OFF WITH IMPULZE

Impulze are a company which may be unknown to many an Amiga user. The full-price version of the Zeppelin label, the Impulze label is run by brothers Darren and Brian Jobling in the software desert of County Durham. Established four years ago as a purely budget label, they now employ a team of seven in-house programmers and graphic artists, in addition to a number of freelancers. Notable for their old school, 'light' approach to the games industry, Impulze have some interesting releases on the horizon, which should increase their profile by quite a degree.

Their big Christmas release has to be *Neighbours*. Featuring those legendary feuding families the Ramseys and the Robinsons, the game takes the form of a frantic chase round all the Erinsborough landmarks (Daphnes, Lassiters etc) with all your favourite(?) characters from the series and the odd marsupial, just to emphasise the Down Under-ness of the proceedings. The game's is currently being stalled by the BBC, who even tried to stall the release until they'd seen all the reviews (hmmm, we can see that catching on). BBC willing, *Neighbours* should be singing their way to your neighbourhood in November.

First up though is *Round The Bend*, based on the cult kids' TV show of the same name. The show has apparently gained quite a following amongst adults, with its *Spitting Image*-style puppets and bizarre humour. The plot of the game closely mirrors that of the series in that everything revolves around the antics of a bunch of animals (led by one Doc Croc) who produce a comic (?!). The game will require the player to take part in comic strip sub-games in an attempt to reach the strip's punch-line, and then put the whole comic together. First impressions are that *Round The Bend* will be different to say the least! Expect to go loony sometime in October.

Graeme Souness' Vector Football is also penned in for an October release. This, the third attempt we've seen at a 3D footy game is certainly the weirdest, visually anyway. Using laughably rough vector graphics (see picture), all doubts are dispelled when the players begin to move. Movement is relatively smooth, and remarkably fluid. Of course, everything will hinge on the actual 'feel' and control system, but the early version bodes well. The code is being handled by Glyn Humphreys, an ex-Domark coder who's previously worked on *RBI 2 Baseball* and Domark's 3D vector system.

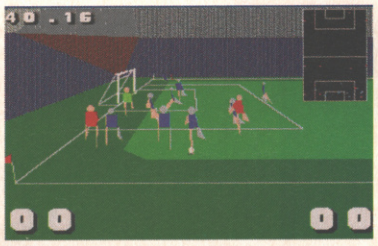
The final release from Impulze this year is *Kawasaki Team Green*, another game in the 3D vector racing vein. With a goal of progressing through the entire training regime in order to gain Team Green status, and represent the team in subsequent races, the game's publicity is to be given an extra boost by Kawasaki themselves. The motoring giants will be be running the game on their stand at next year's NEC Motorcycle Show. Now that's how to market a game.

Zeppelin's budget Platinum label also have some bits and pieces due for imminent release. *Titanic Blinky* is the second game to feature Zeppelin's answer to *Dizzy*, and is likely to appeal to much the same platform/arcade adventure audience. Watch out for some pretty psychedelic scenes though! Sports buffs are advised to watch out for *World Cricket*. Although concentrating on the strategy and management aspects rather than the bat and ball bits, the graphics are a cut above the usual strategy fare, with close-up camera sequences spicing things up quite substantially. We were quite surprised that it's only to be given an outing at budget price. Expect a full review very soon.

Gamers should also keep an eye out for the Air Crew club. For £7.99, Impulze/ Zeppelin are offering a choice of free game, a membership card, bi-monthly newsletter, high score poster, and a voucher worth £5 off an Air Crew T-Shirt. Interested readers should give Impulze/Zeppelin a call on 091 385 7755.

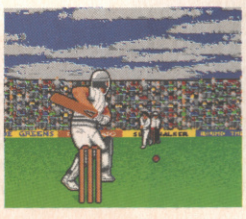
***Neighbours* (the computer game) apparently takes a slightly nutty angle on the Antipodean addiction. The game is based around the series' key locations, but avoids the adventure style route which everyone expected.**

***Round The Bend* will feature all the characters from the *Spitting Image*-style series, using the comic-strip idea as an integral part of the game.**



With the silliest 3D graphics ever, *Vector Football* could still be the best of its type.

Two of the colourful releases coming from the Zeppelin label. *Titanic Blinky* looks suitably sweet...



...while *World Cricket* features some neat animated sequences, despite the strategy nature of the game.

Don't quote us

The first in a new, regular column where we put our brains together and speculate outrageously on possible game licences coming up which might (just might) eventually find their way onto your Amiga. Or maybe not.

• Next year is Olympics year, which means we should be seeing a goodly number of new sports games cropping up – the joystick waggler may even make a comeback of sorts (though we're hoping it won't, naturally). Of course there are sports games and there are sports games – the big licence to get is the Olympics itself, and while it's rumoured Sega have the rights for the console market, what'll happen at the computer end of things is unclear. Could Sega pass it on to long-time conversion partners US Gold, say, or might US G pass it up – it's bound to be prohibitively expensive, for a start – in favour of an unlicensed sports game? After all, US Gold did alright out of an unlicensed World Cup game last time anything this big came up...

• Two of our current coin-op favourites are Sega's *Rad Mobile* (you know, the spectacular driving game with the little *Sonic The Hedgehog* rear-view mirror ornament swinging at the top of the screen) and the four-player Konami beat-'em-up *Vendetta*. Both are ripe for conversion, though US Gold's apparent lack of interest in coin-op based games makes it unclear who'll do *Rad Mobile*, while getting four players round a single Amiga will be a neat trick if you can do it.

• Insomniacs will have seen *American Gladiators*, the late night cross between *The Running Man* movie and TV show *The Krypton Factor*, featuring ordinary Americans in lycra superhero costumes taking on groups of Arnie-style body builders (both male and female) with names like Nitro, Flame and Gold in dangerous-looking (but highly padded) battles. An obvious computer game contendent then (versions are already appearing on consoles in the US) but a buyer seems unclear – perhaps the show needs a more viewer-friendly time-slot first...

• If Ocean's *WWF* does well (and it's bound to, isn't it?) picking up *WCW* (*World Championship Wrestling*), its US competitor, could prove a smart move for some clever software house. It's not as glamourous as the *WWF* (more like British wrestling, in fact) and not as well known, but it'll be cheaper...

• In the light of Virgin's Motorhead licence and the simultaneous release of two new albums, we ask, where's *Guns'n'Roses* – the game? The biggest rock act in the world, complete with their ultra-violent cartoon-images and *Terminator II* links, have to be naturals. And what happened to *Iron Maiden*, the game..?

• In the film world *Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey* (the *Excellent Adventure* sequel) is bound to be picked up by Capstone and published by Accolade, but what about these other possible film properties?: any Jean Claude Van Damme film, particularly the new *Double Impact*, featuring two Jean Claude's as battling twins; Arnie's next action project, *The Crusades*, directed by *RoboCop* creator Paul Verhoeven; *G-Men*, Disney's follow up to the *Rocketeer*, set in 1925 San Francisco and starring the FBI; the current crop of black American action films, including *New Jack City* and *Boyz N The Hood*.

• More film stuff: how about a game based on *The Flintstones* the movie (if it's ever made), rumoured to star Danny DeVito. Indeed, if that happens DeVito could start to rival Arnie in the pixelisation stakes – he's also said to be in a live action *Super Mario Bros* film, which if it arrives could bring with it the first incarnation of the Bros anywhere outside of the Nintendo NES and Super FamiCom. Perhaps even bigger than that though will be Hook, the Spielberg version of the Peter Pan story starring Robin Williams which is simply *bound* to turn up on the Amiga...

• TV yields some interesting possibilites too. Quite why Sumo had never merited a game of its own (it has made fleeting appearances in Firebird's *Oriental Games* and Epyx's *World Games*) is unclear, and one other TV cult sport, the Indian Kabadi, could be interesting too. Also possible is a game based on the as-yet-unseen-in-this-country Jim Henson production The Dinosaurs, a sit com all about a 'typical American dino family.'

THE MEN BEHIND MIDWINTER

Mike Singleton and Hugh Batterbury run Maelstrom, the developers of both *Midwinter* games as well as earlier successes like *War In Middle Earth* and ancient 8-bit classics like *Lords Of Midnight*. Both, of course, were heavily involved in the development of the long awaited *Midwinter II: Flames Of Freedom* (reviewed last issue), so we spoke to them about the game...

First off Mike, what are you happiest with about *Midwinter II*?

Mike: Well technically, I'm happiest with the way the sea moves, particularly the way the waves crash against the land. That was one of the worst bits to do, but it was very satisfying to get it right. In gameplay terms, however, I'm very pleased with the pace we've managed to give it – it's a lot faster to play than the first game. I can tell that by the fact that my sons, who normally turn up their noses at my stuff, have been itching to get their hands on this one! I must be doing something right!

It's still quite a slow moving game though, isn't it? One thing we felt was that a lot of people would be attracted by the sexy front end, but put off once they started playing it because the actual strategy element is so slow and involved.

Hugh: That's why it's designed on two levels – a strategic level and a tactical level. The raids are put in there so you can play and enjoy the game without getting involved in a long, drawn out campaign.

It's true that in the first *Midwinter* you had a huge landscape, and could easily find yourself stuck in the middle of nowhere with nothing to do and no one to meet. You couldn't get into any of the vehicles you might come across – which is why we've included the option to jump into them in *Midwinter II* – and it could generally get very frustrating. This game cures a lot of that.

Yes, but this jumping stuff's a bit odd, isn't it? We could understand you jumping into a truck or something, but a helicopter? How do you manage that?

Mike: Yes, it's stretching the imagination that you could leap into a helicopter, but it's not beyond the realms of the sort of thing that happens in, say, the Bond films. I like to think the game's got some of the same tongue-in-cheek action as those sorts of movies.

What other mistakes from the first game do you think you've corrected?

Hugh: In the first game you only met people when you went into a building, whereas in this one you can see people in the landscape and then chose whether to meet them or not. In *Midwinter* you were effectively controlling a lot of people at once, but we found many players didn't like that, so we changed it so you only control one person, and all the rest interact with you. This new game has over 1000 characters – I should know, I had to come up with lots of them!

And are any of them based on your family and friends?

Hugh: I wouldn't really like to comment!

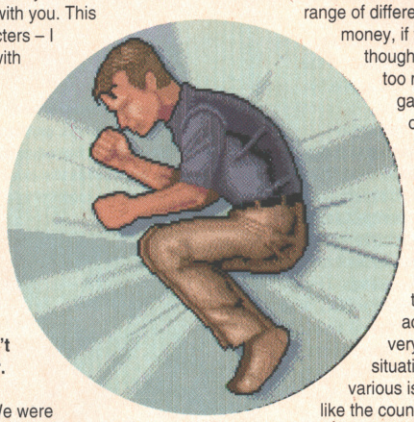
Someone once said you were planning to have fish swimming around in the underwater bits, but we haven't noticed any in the game so far.

Hugh: No, we dropped them. We were going to have sharks in there at one point, but it seemed a bit odd having them moving around when the people you come across in the game can't budge.
Mike: And anyway, apart from them attacking you all the time – which would soon get annoying – we couldn't think of much for them to do!

This game is much more involved with politics than the first one, isn't it

Mike: Yes, your actions are affecting the way a whole society works, rather than just a community of relatively few people. Once again you have to suspend your disbelief – you have to assume there are thousands of people on each island, even if you can't see them! Imagine if we did represent everybody – the player would get really bogged down walking around talking to all these people who couldn't help him in any way. The way we've done it, the ones you meet are the active people on the island.

One thing that strikes us as being very odd is the way the technology works. Some of it's modern day, but some is very old fashioned, and the flying sub seems far too sophisticated for the rest of the game. What's going on?



Hugh: Basically this is an adventure world, and we've got a mix of the old and the new in there to give the player a range of different challenges. It's value for money, if you like. Having said that though, we were careful not to have too many flying subs crop up in the game – it would have made much of the game far too easy to play.
Mike: The situation in this game is that civilisation is still getting back on its feet, so people are making full use of every resource they can get their hands on – and if that includes old technology, like the biplanes, then so be it. In actual fact the Saharan Empire is very closely based on the current situation with the Soviet Union. The various islands in the archipelago are like the countries of Eastern Europe and some of the Soviet republics – they're all part of the same bloc, but it's not going to take much pushing to provoke a revolution. The technology mix is like that of the Soviet Union too – very crude as far as cars and so on are concerned, yet perfectly capable of building MiG 29s or sending men into space.

The way you can use 'sex appeal' to escape from jail is odd, isn't it? What prison guard worth their salt is going to spring you from jail if you sleep with them?

Hugh: The thing about jail is that it's not meant to work strictly realistically. It's there to slow you down and cost you time, not – as it would in a real situation – bring your mission to an abrupt halt. Therefore we allow for a bit of artistic license, making it so that there are always a number of ways you can get out. Using your sex appeal is just one of them.
Mike: Of course, sex appeal will only work on half the population, so it's not an easy get-out!

Do you see this game as a direct descendant of *Lords Of Midnight* et al?

Mike: I think there is a common thread throughout my games – I certainly like something with a lot of strategy in it. I think the more obvious structural similarity is between *Lords Of Midnight* and the first *Midwinter*, though – I remember thinking *Lords Of Midnight* was such a strong basic game structure that it was worth doing it again, but this time using an updated 3D environment. *Midwinter II* isn't as close – the link is more a narrative one than a structural one.

Do you think there might be any more mileage left in the *Midwinter* concept?

Mike: Oh yes, I think there's a lot we could do with the system. The interesting this is that – *Hunter* and a couple of other products aside – nobody's really tried to copy us, despite the success and high profile of the games.

Perhaps it's because they're so hard to do! I wouldn't be surprised if another *Midwinter* cropped up at some point, though doing a *Midwinter VI* or whatever might be pushing it a bit though!

Strange, odd, and downright unlikely things in *Flames Of Freedom*: our hero (top) curls up and goes to sleep, fine – but in the middle of a *firefight*?; this plane gets any closer (above) and you'll be able to jump right into it!; that strange rest option again (left).

ABANDONED PLACES

Or rather *Abandoned Places No1*, to give it its full title, is the first of a new series of role playing games from Electronic Zoo intended to 'give *Eye Of The Beholder II* a real shock'. The programmers, new to this game but fans of *Dungeon Master, Ultima* et al, have done their best to incorporate all the best bits from the big names in this sort of game – an inner and outer world (so you get both the dungeons of *DM* and the outside bits of *Ultima*), intelligent monsters and a vast range of both spells and locations. A one meg only product at £29.99 it'll be available at the start of next year – the only thing that could stop it being 'the best game of its type', claim the Zoo, is the as yet unknown quality of *Ultima VI, Eye Of The Beholder II* and *Might And Magic III*, all due to be released before or around the same time as their new game.

THE AMIGA POWER SILT-SOFT QUIZ THE ANSWERS

1) *Supercars 2*
2) *Switchblade 2*
3) *Speedball 2*
4) *Starglider 2*
5) *Shadow Of The Beast 2*

And the link is... all five are sequels.

THE ROCK-HARD QUIZ ANSWERS

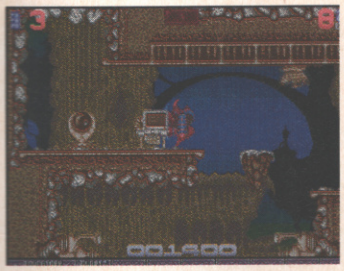
1) *Thunder Blade*
2) *LED Storm*
3) *Rainbow Islands*
4) *Snow Bros*
5) *Typhoon Thompson*

The link between the five answers is... the weather. So there you go.

PSYGNOSIS SHOCKER

– ROGER DEAN-STYLE ART MAKES IT OFF THE PACKAGING AND INTO THE GAME

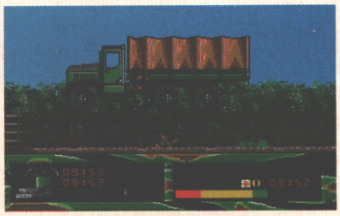
Those bizarre Roger Dean-style graphics, that odd semi-mechanical central character, that arcade adventure/shoot-'em-up structure – it can only be a Psygnosis game. Along with *Barbarian II* and *Leander* (this month's cover disk) comes *Ork*, an odd looking little thing perhaps best described as a 'sort-of' sequel to *The Killing Game Show*. Certainly the odd hopping central character is reminiscent of the hero of *Game Show* (if perhaps even stranger in look) while the running around, opening doors, collecting bits and pieces and shooting lots (and lots) of baddies gameplay can be easily likened to a dozen games. Nothing wrong with that of course – arcade adventures are consistently some of the most playable games available on the Amiga – and this one is certainly strange looking enough to make its mark. Expect a release soon and review next issue.



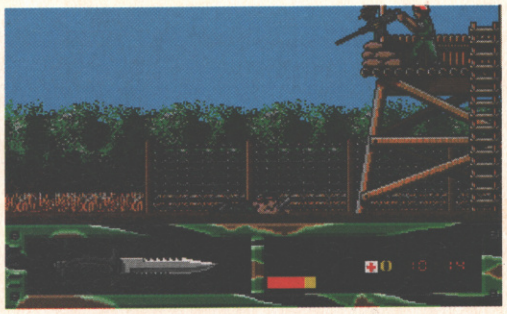
A greener, more organic sort of killing game, *Ork* is another in Pysgnosis long line of 'odd' releases.

FIREFORCE

'The ideal release for Christmas', according to Electronic Zoo, is this sort of thing – an ultra-violent horizontally scrolling blaster in the style of ancient arcade/ Imagine release *Green Beret*. So much for the season of good will. A vast assortment of guns and knives, Vietnam-style settings and masses of enemy soldier cannon fodder make it certainly an action-packed game – whether it's got enough to it to really compete with similar games now out at £7.99 on budget remains until its November release to be seen.



***Fireforce* – the *Green Beret* genre makes a comeback. Here we see our hero making tentative steps into enemy territory.**



Crawl through the undergrowth, lob a grenade at that gun tower, and just wait for the body to coming crashing down to earth. *Fireforce* is the ideal game for Chrimbo.

AMIGA POWER RECOMMENDS

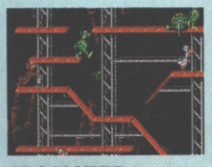
More unmissable slices of software nirvana as painstakingly selected by the AMIGA POWER team

RODLAND
(Storm)

Can the cute platform game go any further? It can't get much cuter than this, it can't get much more playable, and it surely can't get much more fun than this absolutely gorgeous coin-op conversion. Programmers The Sales Curve have taken real pride in the job and come up with something that's even better than the arcade original, and immensely rewarding in its own right.

CRUISE FOR A CORPSE
(US Gold)

US Gold come up with another winner. In fact, it's dead good (sorry). Striking graphics, a non-linear plot, and a couple of arcade sequences for variation make this a classic, although some annoying disk accessing knocks it down just a fraction below the lofty heights of classic status. If you want a game to keep you warm all winter, this is sure to do the trick.



MONSTER BUSINESS
(Eclipse)

Other magazines may tell you 'You can tell this is going to be a bad game just by looking at the back of the box'. Obviously that's all they've done because this unassuming little platformer is one of the most enjoyable platform games we've seen all year. *Dig-Dug* meets *Snow Bros* with cute graphics and groovy music, this is simple gaming fun at its best.

SILENT SERVICE II
(MicroProse)

Thrill seekers will probably find this terminally dull but for sub fans it's hard to fault. MicroProse have cut out all that navigation nonsense, and the mass of the game involves battling it out with the Jap menace, a task which involves a sometimes unbearable degree of suspense. It's scary and violent, but in a mellow kind of way. Hours of underwater fun guaranteed.

HEAD OVER HEELS
(The Hit Squad)

Look, we don't care, we're going to keep right on plugging this until a) it finally gets actually released, and b) everyone in the world owns a copy. The best-designed game ever seen on the Amiga, and the lucky recipient of AMIGA POWER's highest-ever rating, a stratospheric 92%, *Head Over Heels* is the biggest bargain there's ever likely to be.

MEGA LO MANIA
(Image Works)

If there was a God, and if he had a sense of humour, and if he was into computer games, then this is the one he'd most likely want to play. Funny, challenging, and terrifyingly addictive, *Mega Lo Mania* is the most accessible god sim since *Sim City*, and maybe the most enjoyable one ever. If you want an introduction to insanity, here's where to look.

CORE TOP THE LOT

Core are taking the somewhat shocking success of *Thunderhawk* in a cool "Oh we've seen it all before" manner. The truth is though, while most commentators rated it as a top five game, few

***Thunderhawk*: Action packed arcadey chopper sim with appeal**

would have been brave enough to predict first fortnight sales of 15,000, and the number one position after one week.

Core spokesman Richard Barclay commented: "We fully expected it to go straight in at Number One. I don't think there's a game which has had this much effect on the chart since Mirrorsoft's *Turtles*."

So will there be a *Thunderhawk* sequel? "We wouldn't do that just on the basis of its chart position and sales. To say 'Oh yes, we're planning *Thunderhawk 2*' would be a cliché. We will storyboard some possibilities, but there's been no decision yet."

Core enjoyed the delights of a number one position with *Corporation* last year, and no sequel is planned for that, although "we may produce a game along similar lines, but we won't be playing up any *Corporation* connection." In the meantime, Core are on the licence trail, with a 3D racing game pencilled in for Easter. Barclay reckons it'll be "another Number One".

BUNNY BONANZA

When *Ninja Rabbits* first popped onto the scene in the spring, most normal people figured it to be a pretty cheap and unoriginal idea. But cheap and unoriginal ideas have a habit of sticking, and the rabbits

Move over pizza dudes. Those loitering *Ninja Rabbits* are proof that the tackiest ideas are often the most profitable.

have been loitering around the top end of the charts for months.

Clearly, Micro Value don't have the artistic sensitivity of Core, and a sequel is being polished off as you read this. This time there's more gameplay in the beat-'em-up and prettier graphics, but the price will once again stay at £6.99. It'll be out within the next few weeks.

AMIGA POWER GALLUP CHARTS

AMIGA TOP 100

***** Exceptional ***** Nearly there **** Very good *** Has its moments ** Flawed * Grim

1 (NE) THUNDERHAWK Core Design £30.99 *****
2 (NE) NEW ZEALAND STORY Hit Squad £7.99 *****
3 (2) FULL CONTACT Team 17 ***
4 (10) TV SPORTS FOOTBALL Mirror Image £9.99 **
5 (NE) SUPERCARS GBH £7.99 ***
6 (11) NORTH AND SOUTH Action Sixteen £7.99 ****
7 (4) THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND US Gold £25.99 *****
8 (5) FANTASY WORLD DIZZY Code Masters £6.99 ****
9 (1) MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE Krisalis £25.99 ****
10 (NE) CABAL Hit Squad £7.99 ***

11 (7) PGA TOUR GOLF
Electronic Arts £25.99 *****
12 (15) NINJA RABBITS Micro Value £6.99 *
13 (3) F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II
MicroProse £29.99 *****
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US Gold £30.99 *****
16 (8) XENON 2 Mirror Image £9.99 ****
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Psygnosis £25.99 ****
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Mirrorsoft £24.99 *
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MicroProse £29.99 ****
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64 (NE) LAST NINJA 2 Hit Squad £7.99 **
65 (81) KICK OFF 2 Anco £24.99 *****
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68 (54) OPERATION WOLF
Hit Squad £7.99 ***
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CDS £24.99 **
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Hit Squad £7.99 **
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Gremlin Graphics £25.99 *****
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88 (85) ASTERIX Electronic Zoo £7.99 *
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Mastertronic £9.99 **
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100 (RE) FORGOTTEN WORDS Kixx £7.99 **

We figure you must have some idea how the charts work by now, so briefly: they're put together by Gallup, they mix budgies and full pricies together, games are rated in stars, and they're © ELSPA.

WATCH OUT FOR WHITE

Core's chart-topping position may be well deserved, but we fear it's short lived. *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker* has already been despatched to happy retailers in every corner of the nation, and they're all reporting record sales.

***Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*: Could this become the best selling Amiga game ever?**

Expect to see Mr White topping the chart next month, and don't expect to see it drop out of the top 20 for at least six months.

Predictably, speculation is already growing that a sequel is being prepared. Virgin are far too busy to be working on such a project at the moment, and author Archer MacLean is up to his ears in the PC version.

Snooker II is probably on the table, but it won't be arriving for at least a year.

YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING!

It's fascinating to see *Kid Gloves* making a chart entry as a budget re-release, especially as the whole game was given away on AMIGA POWER's coverdisk just six months ago.

That Kid and his gloves just keep on coming, despite his winning performance on an early AMIGA POWER coverdisk.

It's hard to believe that a game like *Kid Gloves* could have performed much better if the coverdisk experience had never happened (Mirror Image's *Skychase*, say, was released on budget around the same time as *Kid* and entered the chart 24 places below it).

What can we tell from this? Well, for one thing, it does tend to punch rather a big hole in the ELSPA argument that full game coverdisk offers are detrimental to the sales of games. In this instance, the EXACT SAME GAME which cost just £2.95 with a magazine six months ago is now doing very well indeed in the charts at over twice the price!

So what's the explanation? Well, simply that the games-buying audience has a fairly short memory – *Kid* may have been better value six months ago, but it's still a barg at £7.99 today. ●

MOONSTONE

A HARD DAYS KNIGHT

SO MUCH FUN -YOU'LL DIE!

Moonstone - a remarkable combination of fast, aggressive combat action and subtle role-play set in a fantasy world, that uniquely challenges your brain and your reflexes - while covering you in gore.

Oh, by the way, if the sight of so much blood upsets you, don't worry. The blood is an option!

Moonstone features nearly 1,000 frames of incredible animation in 2 Megabytes of monsters and creatures, over 60 beautifully painted backdrops and detailed scenery. Sound effects are high quality digital samples and includes a full musical score and stunning full screen animated introductory and game complete sequences.

12

Moonstone contains scenes of strong graphic imagery with particular realism. Although these scenes are optional, this product is voluntarily rated 12. Parental Guidance is recommended for younger players, however this is not a legal requirement.

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MINDSCAPE

For your local dealer, contact: Mindscape International Ltd, The Coach House, Hooklands Estate, Scaynes Hill, West Sussex RH17 7NG. Tel: 0444 831 761

In 1979, a strange phenomenon shook the World – the Invaders landed – ensuring that life would never be the same again.

NOW THEY'RE BACK ... WITH A VENGEANCE!!!

Bigger, badder, brighter, bolder and better, Super Space Invaders sends the game that launched a thousand games rocketing into the 21st Century with a host of amazing features:-

Level after level of increasingly weird and hostile invaders

Amazing multi-way scrolling playfields

Huge end of level mega monsters

Secret hidden levels for only the best to find.

It's the sequel with no equal!

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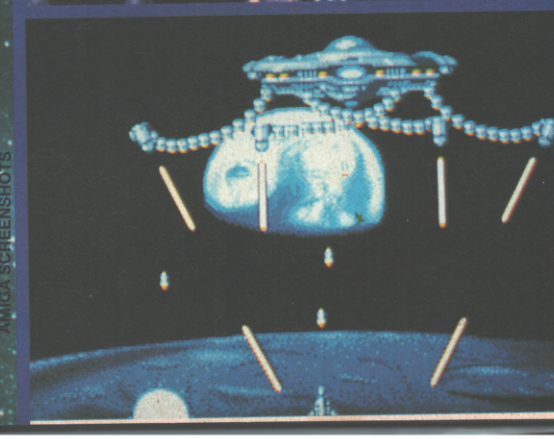
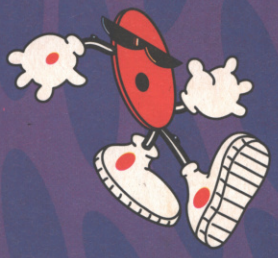


AMIGA SCREENSHOTS

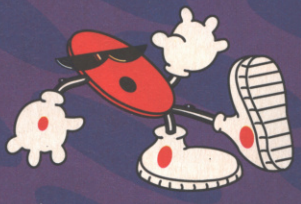
SPOT™



THE COMPUTER GAME!

"Gameplay that's fit to bust."
Amiga Power

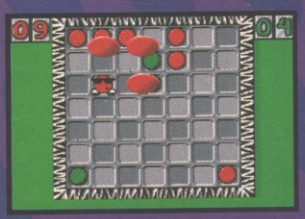
"Original and playable to last a life time. Don't miss it."
New Computer Express

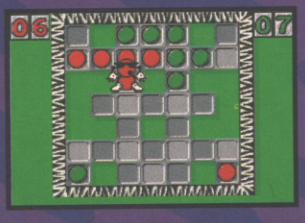


Available on Atari ST, Amiga and C64 disk.

KEEP YOUR EYE ON SPOT™

Amiga screen shots shown.





Virgin
Leisure Genius

JUST WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE?

MATT BIELBY

Matt usually likes his freebie trips out of the office, but (strangely) came over 'far too busy' when US Gold invited him on a recent day out – part of which involved jumping off a 165 foot crane attached to a rubber string! Why, we ask?

Matt's been playing: *The Rainbow Collection, Super Twintris, Rodland*

COLIN CAMPBELL

The Rugby World Cup is on, and Colin's been looking for ways to get out of the office during afternoon matches. The only prob: Matt says if he goes missing at rugby-like times he'll be forced to review every strategy game for six months!

Colin's been playing: *Robocod, Silent Service II*, truant

STUART CAMPBELL

Something's gone horribly wrong. Stuart – despite our attempts to keep it from him – has finally seen the New Computer Express advert on page 62, and his head has swelled to even bigger proportions than usual! Oh no...

Stuart's been playing: *The Blues Brothers, Rodland, Super Twintris*

AMANDA COOK

Gorgeous, pouting Amanda's just arrived from sister mag NCE to take over the art reins from missing crayon wielder Matt Williams. She's new at the mo though, so we're not allowed to write anything nasty about her. Next month, eh?

Amanda's been playing: *The Blues Brothers, Asteroids, Bubble Bobble*

MARK RAMSHAW

This month easily-swayed Mark has spent a bit too much time playing *Pit-Fighter*, and as a consequence has taken to 'working out' in his spare time! We dread to think what's going to happen to freelancers who hand in reviews late...

Mark's been playing: *Lotus Turbo Challenge II, Robocod, Pit-Fighter*

GARY PENN

Gaz is a right old cynic when it comes to games – he's been around so long, one has to be really special to catch his eye, and little comes up to the mark. Until *F1 Grand Prix*, that is – he's like an 8 year old with his first computer again!

Gary's been playing *Grand Prix, Grand Prix* and, erm, *Grand Prix*

LISA NICHOLLS

Lisa's been with us for a few months now (that was her on the compo page last month) but due to a lack of suitable photographic evidence she's thus far avoided the infamous Games Intro page. But now – hurrah! – here she is!

Lisa's been 'playing': Quark Express, PageMaker, Freehand...

NEIL WEST

Neil usually reviews games for sister mag Sega Power, so he know a thing or two about cutsie console-style releases. He also knows about preening and posing – at the mo he's auditioning to present a computer show on Channel 4!

Neil's been playing: *Lotus Turbo Challenge II* and *Sonic The Hedgehog*

JONATHAN DAVIES

Jonathan's decided to turn over a new leaf. He says it's important to lead a varied and constructive lifestyle – not just sit around inside playing games all day – so he's got a new hobby. And what is it but... radio hamming! Oh no...

Jonathan's been playing: *Their Finest Hour, Rise of the Dragon*

SEAN MASTERSON

Sean says he's been typecast as the boring old text adventure and strategy games buff. It's not true though – it was never our intention to typecast Sean by giving him only those sort of games to play, just to victimise him!

Sean's been playing: *Cruise For A Corpse* and *First Samurai* (C64)

GAMES

This is where the important stuff really begins – it's the AMIGA POWER REVIEW SECTION, where each month we put every new game under the hard-nosed (but scrupulously fair) scrutiny of our infamously tough reviews team.

This month it's no different, except, as you'd expect just before Christmas, we're reviewing more BIG GAMES THAN EVER before. Yes, you're right – 'big' doesn't necessarily mean 'good', but on the whole things are looking pretty darn peachy at the moment. First off there's a TRIO OF TOP-NOTCH DRIVING GAMES: Geoff Crammond's eagerly anticipated *Formula One Grand Prix*, *Lotus II* from Gremlin and, of course, US Gold's *OutRun Europa*. You'd probably have to be a bit of a DRIVING PSYCHOPATH to buy all three, but we reckon everybody should contemplate investing in at least one of them.

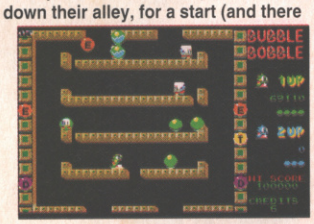
***F1 Grand Prix*: simply stunning**

***Robocod*: giant teddy bears bouncing up and down trying to squish you!**

Then, and of an entirely different nature, there's *The Blues Brothers*, which we all EXPECTED TO BE CRAP, but in fact proves to be excellent – a really worthwhile version of the movie. In fact we're doing pretty well in the LIGHTWEIGHT BUT FUN department, with games like *Robocod, Hudson Hawk* and *Mega Twins* all falling within the good-to-excellent bracket.

People who like a bit MORE MEAT on their games haven't been ignored either – Domark's updated *MiG 29M Super Fulcrum* or Sierra's adventure games should be right down their alley, for a start (and there are plenty more where they came from too).

That's not all though – the BUDGET CONSCIOUS should remember our budget, compilation and PD coverage starts on page 95, where such golden greats as *Bubble Bobble* and *Batman The Movie* – as well as top newies like *Magicland Dizzy* – can be picked up for less than a tenner, while All-Time Top 100 game *Archipelagos* is among many good games to arrive at a mere £2.99! More than ever, this month we've got SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE...



***Bubble Bobble*: old, cheap, simple, primitive looking but quite possibly Game Of The Month...**

IN A NUTSHELL: THE AMIGA POWER SCORING SYSTEM (AND HOW IT WORKS)

Our reviewing 'philosophy' (for want of a better word) is fairly simple and self explanatory. Here's a brief breakdown on how it works:

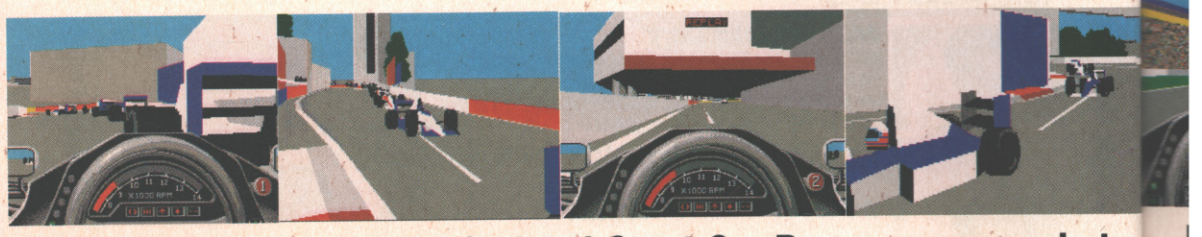
1) We never forget you're being asked to fork out £25 or more for a full price game – it's a lot of money, and we believe a product has to be really good to be worth it. Half baked ideas, cynical tie-ins and plain sloppiness just don't cut it, which is why you'll find our reviews quite possibly the toughest around. Compare the marks we give out to those of just about any other magazine – we think you'll find our wider spread of opinion tells you a lot more about the games.

2) We believe a rating system should be simple, logical and understandable – to the extent that a sentence like this is one, which is setting out to try and explain it, should prove totally redundant. So we'll stop right here.

3) We'll nearly always broadly agree about whether a game is good or bad, but sometimes – just sometimes – opinions differ quite strongly. That's when we run an 'On the other hand...' box, allowing a second reviewer to voice his or her (not that we have any girlie reviewers as yet) opinions as appropriate.

4) Predictable we know, but there simply isn't a point number four.

Formula One Grand Prix **– setting new standards in game excellence. This selection of game highlights demonstrate just how spectacular and comprehensive it actually is. 3D has never looked so good. Even the cars have actual drivers in the seats! Indeed, this game shows an attention to detail which has up 'til now seemed impossible...**

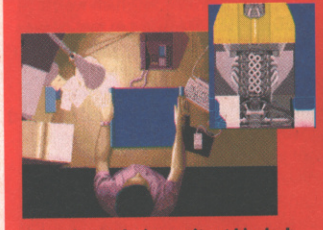


From the man behind classics such as *Sentinel* and *Stunt Car Racer* comes what

FORMULA ONE

DAYS OF WONDER

An animated introductory sequence sets the scene. It's superfluous, maybe, but at least it doesn't get intrusive...



A lonely car designer sits at his desk, working out his design for a racing car.

And here's that very same car being put together in the pits.

The driver slips carefully into the newly-built cockpit...

... then puts on his helmet in preparation for the big race.

Game: Formula One Grand Prix
Publisher: MicroProse
Price: £34.99
Authors: Geoff Crammond (design, coding, track visuals), Norman Surplus (track data implementation), Mark Scottt (front end visuals)
Release: Late November

Ahem. I have a confession to make: I don't like racing. Actually, that's not quite true – I don't like *watching* motor racing very much. I do like driving very fast though, but what with the British national speed limit being so low and being such a sad man and all, that more often than not means resorting to playing computer-based driving simulations. So what a pity it is that almost all of them are pretty crap – and that's on all compters, not just the Amiga.

"I found myself drowning in adrenalin"

Why, you could count the number of decent driving simulations on the fingers of one hand that's had the thumb and little pinky cut off. Let me see... There's Gremlin's *Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge*, which isn't too bad (the sequel's more of a doozy though), and Geoff Crammond's *Stunt Car Racer*, which is smarter than Einstein ever was. Ah yes, and there's Electronic Arts' *Indianapolis 500*, which only has one course but is the best motor racing simulation money can buy.

Was, sorry. *Indianapolis 500 was* the best motor racing simulation money could buy. I'm not going to beat about the bush: *Formula One Grand Prix* thrashes the pants off *Indianapolis 500* and dumps on everything else from a great height.

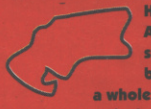
The truck-load of options doesn't

Victory may well taste a lot sweeter than champagne, but there's absoltely nothing more traditional – or fun! – than spraying the contents of a giant bottle of bubbly over all and sundry...

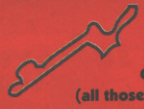
ALL SIXTEEN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CIRCUITS ARE FEATURED,

PHOENIX
Arizona is the setting for this urban circuit. It has mostly 90 degree bends, and concrete walls create a tunnel effect and demand tight lines. As with on any street circuit, overtaking can be a problem.

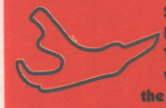
MONACO
This French urban circuit has a tunnel and an evil hairpin. Its streets are narrow, making overtaking all the more difficult. A healthy qualifying time is essential to have a chance of succeeding here.



HOCKENHEIM
A German circuit with straights punctuated by three chicanes and a whole load of nasty twists and turns, particularly the Agipkurve, Sachskurve and Opelkurve.



MAGNY-COURS
The recent French addition to the World Championships is fast (all those straights) even though it involves almost doubling back on yourself on more than one occasion.



SPA FRANCROCHAMPS
The Belgian circuit's widely regarded as the most exciting track in the world, even though it's very dangerous in the wet. It's fast and there's little margin for error.

INTERLAGOS
This Brazilian circuit is dusty and hard on the tyres. The only real opportunity to overtake is on the pit straight.

MEXICO
The thin air affects the cars' performances, especially around the sharp corners – and there are plenty of them here. It still manages to be a pretty fast circuit though.

MONZA
The second Italian circuit provides plenty of overtaking possibilities and a couple of awkward chicanes which force the driver to abuse his car in order to set a decent time.

has to be the last word in racing simulations... and possibly the best game ever!

GRAND PRIX

really come into it. I mean, any dork and his dog can collate buckets of statistics for a technically accurate world championship motor racing system (and given the quality of some of the previous racing simulations, those people have obviously been hard at work doing so). It takes more than a number-crunching nancy to take all the available data in the world and turn it into a simulation as good as this one.

The facility to enter your name or take that of one of the world's leading Grand Prix racers does nothing for me. Nor does being able choose for which of the teams in the World Championship you wish to race.

"Formula One dumps on everything else from a great height"

The fact that the car you choose from the 26 available determines the performance of the opposition (with their skills based on statistics from the real 1990 season) is more appealing – as is the opportunity to fiddle with the car's tyre type, wing angle, brake balance and gear speeds before testing it. (Incidentally, the car's are colour-coded to their respective teams).

...unless, of course, it's building up a cabinet packed full of nice sparkling trophies. And look – we've managed to collect ourselves another one!

DON'T IT MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD?

So those are some of the options, which are all well and good. But to turn me on, so to speak, a driving simulation in any shape or form simply has to 'feel' good. *Formula One Grand Prix* doesn't feel good, that's for sure. It feels abso-bloody-lutely bloody brilli-bloody-ant. And that's a fact.

Not ever having driven a Formula One car, let alone in a World →

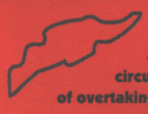
Look at this – another spin, this time viewed from inside my car. That black car should just miss me, but that's little consolation for all the hard work expended on making 19th position.

It's the pits. The level of *Formula One Grand Prix*'s attention to detail really becomes apparant in scene like this. Just how did Geoff Crammond do it?

Oh dear. This guy's out of the race for good, that's for sure. (It was quite a shock to see for the first time a driver pushing his car to one side of the track). You won't get to see this particular sight a second time – a crane lifts the car out of harm's way off the circuit.

EACH ONE ACCURATELY MODELLED ON ITS REAL COUNTERPART

IMOLA
A fast Italian circuit with some challenging bends and chicanes.



MONTREAL
Canada's circuit is almost like a street circuit. It's fast with plenty of overtaking possiblities.

HUNGARORING
Hungary's circuit isn't particularly interesting, and it's slow due to the many corners.

SUZUKA
Japan provides the only figure of eight circuit on the current calendar. It combines long straights with tight hairpins and plenty of fast and sweeping bends.

ESTORIL
Portugal's circuit is the most physically demanding on the calendar. There are few places to overtake, and taking tight, accurate lines is essential.

SILVERSTONE
The United Kingdom's circuit isn't what it used to be – and that's dangerous. The modified version is still very fast though.

JEREZ
This Spanish circuit is long, dusty and hot, which makes life hard for the engine, brakes and suspension. However, it's being replaced this year by the purpose-built Circuit de Catalunya in Barcelona.

ADELAIDE
The final circuit is Australian. It's a tough urban track whichgenerally proves heavy on the brakes and rear tyres.

This baldy slap-head's the commentator who provides his tuppence worth between races. (And if the guy this fellow's supposed to represent is reading this, I'm sorry – maybe you have your hair cut that way).

Championship Grand Prix, I really wouldn't know if the car's handling and performance is realistic or whether the race tracks are accurately mapped.

And as far as the vehicle's concerned, I honestly couldn't care less. What I do know is that the car handles like a dream – it feels how I'd expect the reality to feel, so I couldn't ask for more. And as for the courses, they match curve for curve and (where appropriate) bridge for bridge and building for building the circuit diagrams found in books on the subject of motor racing, so I can't argue with that.

The feeling of 'being there' is far stronger than I have experienced in any other simulation, which is probably down to the uncannily high level of detail. There are crowds, buildings, kerbs, track markings, trees, and even pit crews for crying out loud. Sparks fly from the cars just like the ones you see in the racing on TV – so does the spray in the wet! – and the drivers are clearly visible. Every turn and bump and skid had me wriggling in my seat, and the sensation of speed is so convincing I found myself drowning in adrenalin.

"It feels abso-bloody-lutely bloody brilli-bloody-ant"

WELL, HEY, THEM'S THE BRAKES

Hold on though. Surely there must be something wrong with *Formula One Grand Prix*. Or am I in the midst of some sycophantic haze? Well, no, there isn't really – and no I'm not. There's nothing remotely irritating about *Formula One Grand Prix*. It's so slick, there's more chance of finding Lord Lucan than there are faults here.

The best I can do is comment on the lack of camera angle potential. The visuals are so smart that you can't help but yearn for the facility to view the action from every conceivable angle. That said, the track-side camera views are in fact more than adequate.

My only other (very) minor gripe is even though the crashes are as painful-looking as any you are ever likely to see on a 16-bit home computer simulation, I'd still like to have seen more pieces fly off the cars involved in a pile up.

Formula One Grand Prix succeeds on every possible level. It offers the most comprehensive possible simulation of a motor racing event, but better still there's the sheer exhilaration of an outstanding driving experience. And I can't say "farthntht". ● *GARY PENN*

UPPERS It's super slick. Every worthwhile option is included, and the tutorial nature of the difficulty settings is most commendable (especially being able to tear along the dotted line). The attention to detail is something else. A more realistic, accurate, adrenalin-boosting racing sim simply isn't available.

DOWNERS Um... I suppose if this sort of thing only succeeds in driving you up the wall, then the high level of realism on offer here will only press your hat all the harder. Otherwise, there's nothing about *Formula One Grand Prix* that brings me down.

THE BOTTOM LINE

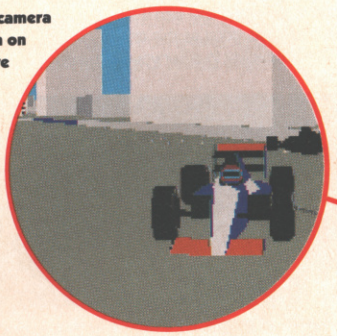
Remarkable. Incredible. Great. Unbelievable. Phenomenal. (And far out even.) All other racing simulations can quite simply cough and die. *Formula One Grand Prix* is just too sexy for the Amiga.

92 PERCENT

LAPPING IT ALL UP

A real Grand Prix is 200-miles or two hours long – whichever comes first. In this *Formula One Grand Prix* you can race for as large a percentage of the Real Thing as you can handle, with every relevant aspect adapted accordingly. You can also practice or take part in a one-off race on any one of the 16 courses in the World Championship, with or without other cars on the circuit. Here's a race commentary of sorts for a 10-lap race around the street circuit of Phoenix (Arizona, USA)...

So here I am, right at the back of the starting grid, revving my car's engine in anticipation for when the lights go green.



As you can see from this trackside camera view, I managed to end up in a spin on Washington Street. Vital seconds are wasted on a recovery, and before I know it I'm at the back of the pack again. It's going to take some hard driving to claw my way back up the ranks.

Hello, Mum. There's no time to wave to the trackside camera as I come out of that right-angle bend.

It's not easy to enter the pits on this course, but I managed it. My pit's not even visible at the end of this special stretch of track, but it is there, awaiting my arrival.

In fact, you can see the pit managers even closer still as I pass them by...

And here they are in all their glory: my very own pit crew – four of them bearing new tyres, and the other ready to jack up my motor. I'd better slow down.

Inspired by the sign sliding on screen, I screech to a halt.

Out comes the chamois leather to clean my visor while the car's touched up, as it were, before I rejoin the race, refreshed.

CRAMMOND: A DECADE IN POLE POSITION

Geoff Crammond is the business. His entertainment track record may not be particularly long, but it's certainly strong. This man just doesn't seem to be able to put a foot wrong, so we just had to ask him why...

"I don't know," he replies. Mr Crammond is a modest man – and it shows. Even though *Formula One Grand Prix* is quite obviously hotter ten times hotter than July, he doesn't blow his own trumpet any harder than, "I'm pleased with the different look of the tracks, and the mechanics and the number of cars on screen at once." Not one to brag, this Mr Crammond.

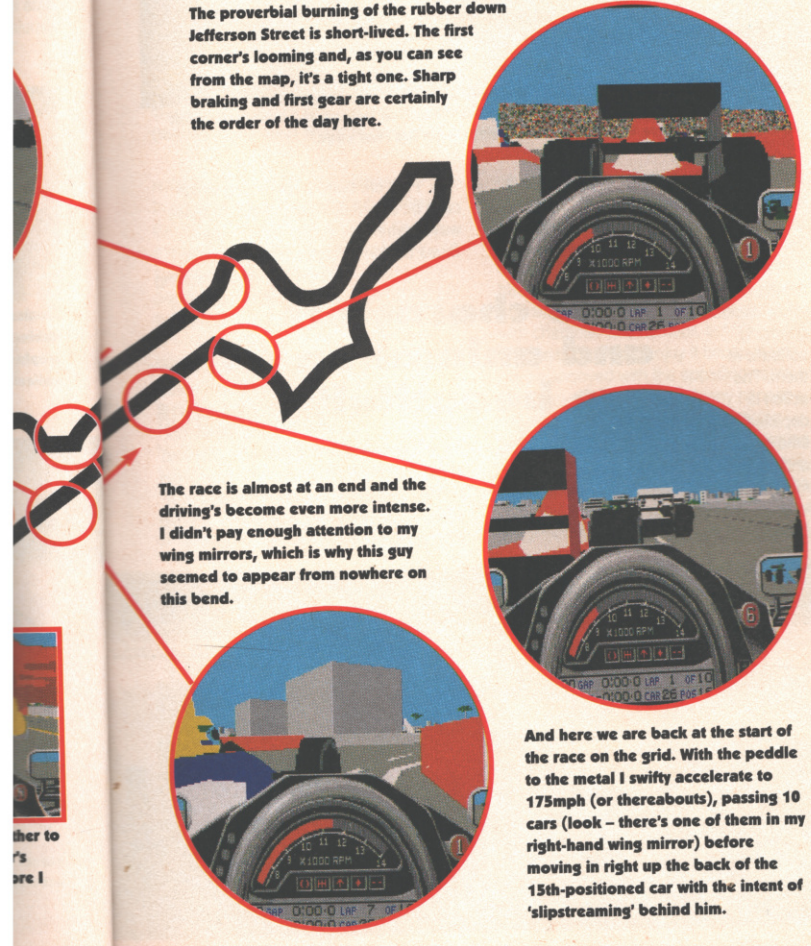
Geoff Crammond worked as a systems engineer for eight years before he bought himself a BBC in March of '81, taught himself assembly language and wrote *Super Invaders*. His interest in motor racing began with his classic simulation *Revs*. "I didn't follow it before then, but once I became immersed in the project and all aspects of the sport, the technical side became apparent and I realised there was a lot more to it than I thought."

Work on *Formula One Grand Prix* began in March. "There was no way I was going to redo *Revs*. I didn't look at *Revs* at all, although the experience of doing *Revs* helped. I don't have much time to play games, but I will look at things out of professional interest, and I usually look at reviews – but not in too much detail. I don't want to be influenced."

Geoff's retisent to reveal the source of his technical information which contributes to *Formula One Grand Prix* being so fine. "A lot of the information was hard to get hold of, but it helps to know something about the maths behind it. Some just takes research though. I've been video taping every Grand Prix I can for the last few years. There's one instance where Senna was shown doing an in-car lap, with a computer readout of his speed, and knowing the layout of the circuit and the characteristics meant I could work backwards to get information."

GEOFF CRAMMOND SOFTOGRAPHY

1981	*Super Invaders*	BBC (Acornsoft)
1982	*Aviator*	BBC (Acornsoft)
1984	*Revs*	BBC (Acornsoft) Commodore 64 (Firebird)
1986	*The Sentinel*	BBC, Commodore 64, Amstrad Atari ST (Firebird) * * Steve Bak did the Amiga conversion
1989	*Stunt Car Racer*	Commodore 64 Atari ST Amiga (Firebird)
1991	*Formula One GP*	Atari ST Amiga (MicroProse)
1992	*Formula One GP*	IBM PC (MicroProse)

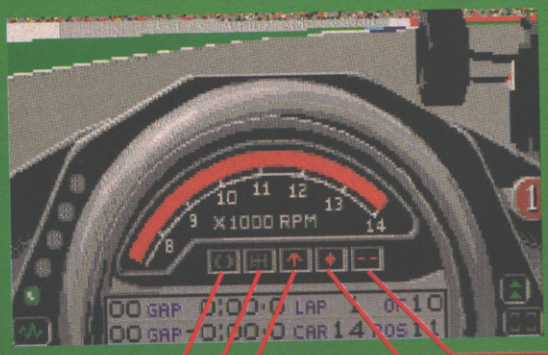


The proverbial burning of the rubber down Jefferson Street is short-lived. The first corner's looming and, as you can see from the map, it's a tight one. Sharp braking and first gear are certainly the order of the day here.

The race is almost at an end and the driving's become even more intense. I didn't pay enough attention to my wing mirrors, which is why this guy seemed to appear from nowhere on this bend.

And here we are back at the start of the race on the grid. With the peddle to the metal I swifty accelerate to 175mph (or thereabouts), passing 10 cars (look – there's one of them in my right-hand wing mirror) before moving in right up the back of the 15th-positioned car with the intent of 'slipstreaming' behind him.

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE GRAND PRIX



AUTOMATIC BRAKING
The computer's braking is over-cautious, but it works.

AUTOMATIC GEAR CHANGE
As with the braking, the computer's gear changes are efficient but not the most effective.

INDESTRUCTIBILITY
Guess what?

SELF-CORRECTING SPIN CONTROL
If you get in a spin, get out of it slowly but surely with this function.

BEST LINE GUIDANCE SYSTEM
Now this is cool. A broken white line runs right round the course – all you have to do is follow it.

It takes years to learn how to race as well as, say, Mr Mansell. I haven't got that kind of time to spare, and I'm sure you haven't either, which is a problem for a simulation as realistic as this – isn't it? Well, no. Not even slightly. *Formula One Grand Prix* has a tutorial system of sorts which accomodates all levels of driving skill. Depending on the difficulty level determined via a selection of 'Realism Modifiers', the computer takes care of certain functions essential for successful racing. For example, novices can drive a car which requires no more interaction than accelerating and steering. As your skills improve, you can drive with less and less help until ultimately you find yourself racing for real (well, almost – this is a simulation after all). So, you get to the learn the courses, but the beauty of this education process is that you can't excel until you master the car and don't have to rely any computer aid.

ON THE OTHER HAND... This isn't so much to quibble with the mark Stuart's given *Hudson Hawk* – I might have been a few percent more generous but no more – but just to make a couple of points. For a start, lots of people like *Rick Dangerous*-type games – they like the fact that every couple of screens you come across a section that's so hard it'll take you ages to get it right. Stuart doesn't like games like that, and to be honest I don't really either, but some people love them, and it's worth bearing in mind. Secondly, a couple of more useful comparisons than *The Blues Brothers* are, I think, Ocean's very own *Simpsons* and *RoboCop II*. *The Blues Brothers* is very much an arcade-style product, and thus puts a lot of effort in being clean, smooth and fast to play – *Hudson Hawk* doesn't do that. For all the look of the graphics, it is a *computer* game – the emphasis is on providing value for money (which often translates into making some bits so hard they'll take you ages to do), not in catching 50 pence and five minutes of your time. Thus it is a lot trickier than *The Blues Brothers*, and I dare say someone who bought it would get more hours of fun out of it – *BB* simply wouldn't last as long.

Having said that, I agree with most of what Stu says about tricky movement making up for only so-so game design. There's a disturbing tendancy in most of Ocean's non-bitsy designs to produce well programmed and good looking games which fall down on the playtesting/ control side by cheating on you – by which I mean giving you 'value for money' (perhaps most obviously in *Robo II*) by making things harder than by rights they should be in lazy, unsatisfying ways. If they didn't do that I think they'd be rated five to ten percent higher each time. *– Matt Bielby*

Ocean change tack for their latest film licence, opting for a *single* game style to represent Bruce Willis' lovable roguery.

HUDSON HAWK

Game: Hudson Hawk
Publisher: Ocean
Authors: Ian Moran (game), Keith Tinman (sound) at Special FX
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

The Vatican roof – perfectly good looking, but would you believe you can actually fall through the bit where the statue casts a shadow on the roof edge?

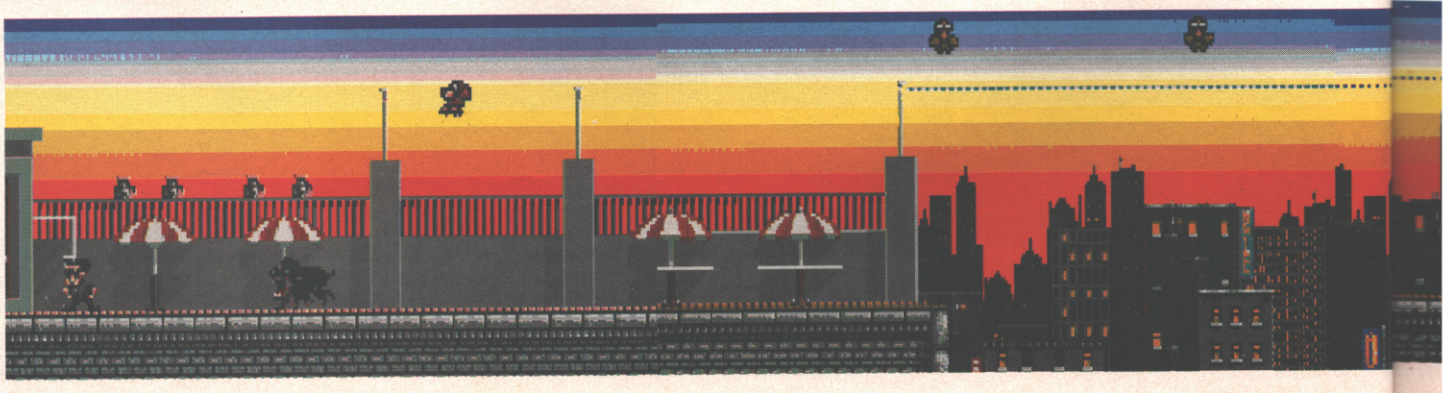
Bruce Willis' recent catburgling movie *Hudson Hawk* has been the recipient of universal panning since its release, which is something it has in common with most of the films Ocean have based recent games on. (*Darkman* being the bottom of the barrel, in both movie and game terms). A flurry of poor multi-section production-line jobs from the Manchester software behemoths did nothing to increase expectations of something worthwhile coming from this venture either, but with *Hudson Hawk* Ocean and programming team Special FX (a talented bunch with a pedigree stretching way back to the 8-bits, most notable – as far as I'm concerned anyway – for their excellent conversions of the coin-op *Midnight Resistance*) have bravely deviated from the norm and concentrated on one game style, in an attempt to put together something with a bit of coherence to it.

AND WHAT'VE THEY COME UP WITH?

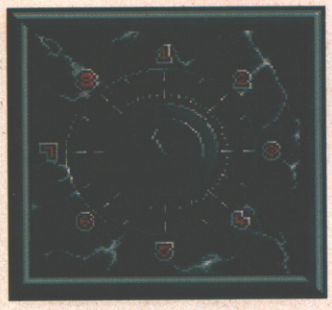
Well, an uncomplicated platform romp with very minor puzzling elements thrown in as much as a pacing device as anything, set over 15 levels, each corresponding to various sections of the movie. Superfluous plot aside, your objective in each case is simply to get to the end of each stage before your time limit runs out, in which you're aided by the ability to swot baddies with a huge boxing glove or throw explosive bouncing softballs at them. The action is depicted in time-honoured cute cartoony graphic style, and accompanied by suitably cheesy music and sound effects, and it's all very lovely. Could there be a success in the offing?

"The characters and animation are beautiful"

First off, there's something which can't be avoided. This game is, in many ways, extremely similar to Titus' new *Blues Brothers* licence (check out the review starting on p46). The look is very much the same, the basic platform nature of the action is the same, but the whole feel is of two games separated at birth. Comparisons are inevitable, then, and the fact of the matter is that *Hudson Hawk* comes off worst every time. It's just a bit too big to have the same focus, it

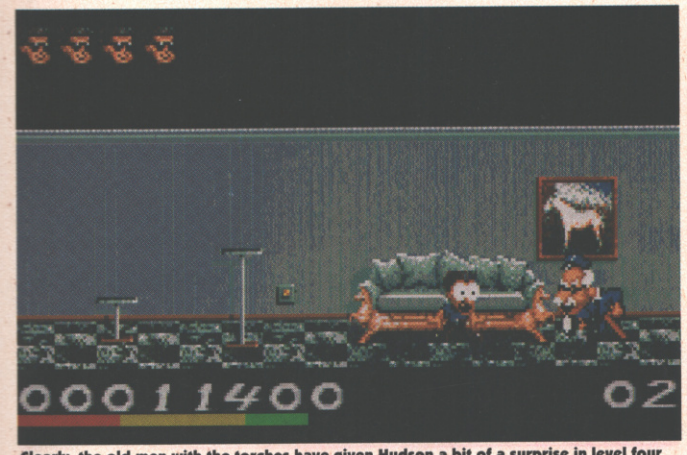


In the second level, you have to contend with what looks suspiciously the Village People armed with pistols! Lumme!



This is the safecracking sub-game, not unlike the middle section of *Batman*. Beat this and you'll win an extra life.

The game takes a little artistic licence with the movie plot – I don't remember the 'rhino in the library' section myself.



Clearly, the old men with the torches have given Hudson a bit of a surprise in level four (the museum). Neat *Weird Dreams*-style comic effect, isn't it?

relies too heavily on *Rick Dangerous*-style frustration rather than 'proper' challenge (by which I mean there's far too much memory-testing and incredibly finicky platform-leaping involved as opposed to genuinely taxing gameplay), but mostly iit suffers from one of the most incredibly irritating control systems I've had the misfortune to encounter all year.

ROLL AND ROCK

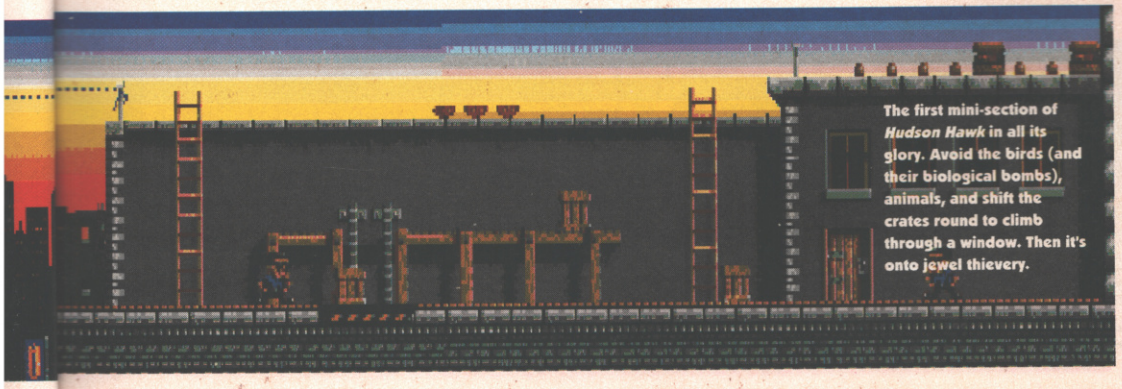
Hudson's movement is afflicted with the kind of inertia which makes you feel as if he's permanently on rollerskates, and it makes it incredibly frustrating making the simplest platform to platform leap if you're never quite sure whether you're going to stop near the edge of a platform or tumble right off the side of it.

What it really smacks of is an attempt to make the game harder without really having to change anything, and it's plain and simple laziness. *Hudson Hawk* drips with character and humour, but it's impossible to really enjoy it because you get so annoyed with the appalling control. For every time something funny happens, there'll be a time when your character slides out of control over a ledge or jumps sideways into a baddie from a position of complete safety and gets sent back to the start of the level, and you end up hurling the joystick to the floor in a rage. Not, and this is the crucial difference between this game and *The Blues Brothers*, a rage at your own incompetence in messing up some simple-looking task, but a rage at the surprisingly and un-necessarily weak design of a game which hasn't got the guts to take you on fairly.

Don't get me wrong though. *Hudson Hawk* is easily Ocean's best attempt at a movie licence since *Batman*, and in some other month might have picked up a rather more favourable mark. The point is, *The Blues Brothers* has come along and cruelly exposed every niggling little flaw in the design and implementation, leaving *Hudson* a mile behind it in every aspect. The characters and animation are beautiful, and it holds together better than almost any movie game I've seen, but it eventually gets so annoying that you're likely to give up well before you get to the end.

"Hudson is afflicted with the kind of inertia which makes you feel as if he's on rollerskates"

It would help if it was just a little bit shorter – and it's rare you'll ever find us complaing about a game having too much to it! – or if there was some way of not having to start at the very beginning whenever you lose all your lives, but as it stands you never really feel as though the end is within your grasp. This stands for both the game as a whole and for individual levels – all too often a stage will be littered with little traps which deposit you miles back within that level (and frequently they're very tricky timing and reaction tests which will catch you repeatedly even when you know they're coming). *Hudson Hawk* is a pretty decent game, and one I though I'd like a lot more than I did, but if the programmers hadn't played so much *Rick Dangerous* it would have been a whole lot better. ● *STUART CAMPBELL*



The first mini-section of *Hudson Hawk* in all its glory. Avoid the birds (and their biological bombs), animals, and shift the crates round to climb through a window. Then it's onto jewel thievery.

UPPERS: Looks good, loads of character, lots of nice little funny touches. No Bruce Willis (to speak of) either.

DOWNERS: Totally dumb control system means you spend more time fighting against the programming than against the actual game. Too big not to have level codes or something similar, especially with the number of times it sends you backa few screens.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A big improvement on Ocean's other recent movie licence efforts, but check out Titus' *Blues Brothers* to see how *Hudson Hawk should* have been done.

75 PERCENT

And now to our man on the spot for a running commentary: "And he's off to a cracking start, over the first chest and safely past the stalagmites.

US Gold come up with another conversion of a cute CapCom coin-op, this time featurin

MEGA TWINS

Game: Mega Twins
Publisher: US Gold
Price: £25.99
Author: Andrew Swan and Peter Tatersall at Twilight
Release: November

Dragon's are stupid creatures. OK, they're fine at rampaging, terrorising and most things of an evil bent, and they can become remarkably handy at barbecues. But when it comes to a dragon's real work, that of knuckling down and actually getting on with the job of casting dark shadows over a once peaceful land, they always seem to leave the job half-finished. Make one fatal mistake, if you will.

Let me explain. Once upon a time there was a peaceful country called Alurea. For 1000 years... etc. Anyway, the inevitable and probably well-deserved dragon invasion goes through the motions and kills everybody. Everybody except – and this is the incredible bit – the king's twin sons. Why!? Even the most turnip-brained, slow-witted Dragon should have spotted their obvious potential – these two text-book examples of super-heros in the making – a mile off. But no, realism is sacrificed for gameplot (but would you want it any other way?) and fifteen years later the twins have grown up.

THOSE TERRBILE TEEN TWINS

And now – as you've no doubt guessed – they're on a mission. They have the help of a seagull. They wear primary colours in built-up areas. Together they are a whacking 205 lbs of unadulterated cute. And here they come...

I like cute games and I'm not scared to admit it (but probably only because I know I'm not alone). There always have been and (hopefully always will be) almost as many 'cuties' around as there are shoot-'em-ups – they're two of the longest-established game formulas around. So US Gold present *Mega Twins*, a colourful, magical and, well, cute – there's no getting around it – tale of the dynamic duo's adventure, and it's typical of the genre.

Originally a moderately successful platform adventure coin-op from CapCom, your Amiga version sticks rigidly to the original plot and presentation, and through the fantastic use of colour and sprite design successfully brings a very arcadey feel to the graphics and gameplay.

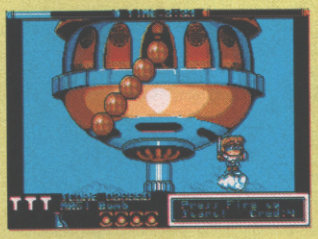
There are three introductory levels of action, and then six 'battle stages' in which the two cuties must hack, slash and hit-the-ALT-key-to-use-some-magic their way through what seems like 57 varieties of the cutest little baddies you ever did see. Even when the action hots up on screen, you'd be forgiven for mistaking the harrowing scenes of death and grimness for a Christmas party in a Toys-R-Us. Don't underestimate the cuteness here folks – these guys are to menace and evil what Arnie is to raffia-work.

The first level is set in a forest and underground caverns, the second is underwater (our heroes provided with snorkels) and for the third bit our airborne heroes take to the sky. (Oh yes, and proving that there's a bit of Rolf Harris in

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

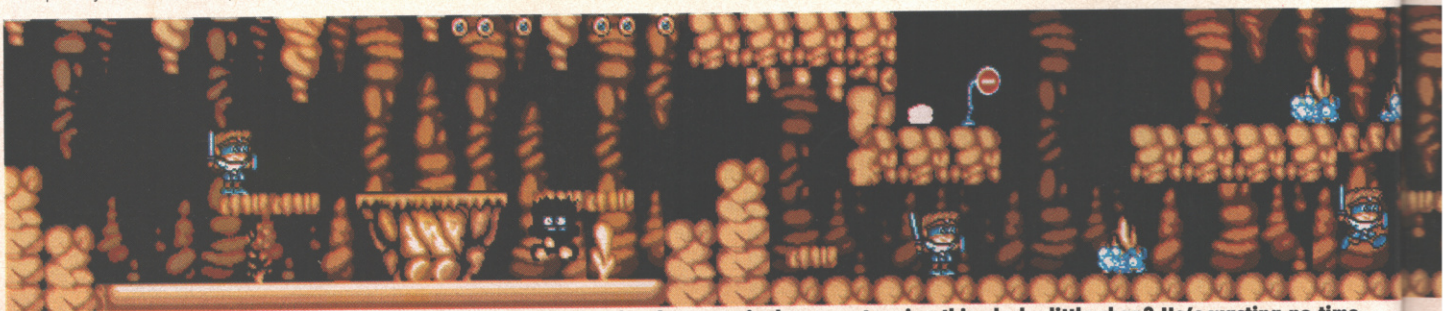
And here are just three reasons to be cheerful. From the deserts of Sudan, to the gardens of Japan (almost) the dynamic duo hit the baddies with their fighting sticks. The background's just ooze primary colour loveliness, with the gamestyle varying accordingly.

If you ask my advice, there's nothing so nice, as messing about on the river. These two, on the other hand, take things to the extreme and jump right in at the deep end.



Just look at the hat! How cute? That poor little bird has to carry the two bouncing-bros through rain and windy weather without so much as a packet of trill or cuttlefish by means of thank you.

It's all got a bit much for Player 1. He waves the white flag as he falls off the bottom of the screen. Now why didn't you call for the help of your brother while you had the chance?



The backgrounds are pulsating different colours and signposts point the way – is there no stopping this plucky little chap? He's wasting no time.

A quick pause for breath and the race continues. Watch out for the beans! Oh, cleverly avoided and he's into the cave...

...aturing a pair of mischievous kids – and only their mother can tell the sweeties apart!

everyone, I've just got to tell you to watch out for bit in the sky where the Twins are held aloft by birds in their hats – it's brilliant!) The baddies change each level, so when you're underwater you're fighting fish, when you're in the sky it's an assorted variety of feathered foes, and when in the forest – well, 'things with legs' should cover it. The Twins collect coins along the way – and power-ups from treasure chests – as they continue their inevitable and unstoppable progress from left to right.

OK, so you've got the plot. But what's it like then? Well, the most immediately striking attraction is the graphics. Everything is cannily designed with fantastic attention to detail. Not only do the backgrounds vary enormously, but the animation in front of them is tailored to match the surroundings. Our two heroes move incredibly smoothly, and display a remarkable repertoire of expressions and 'custom' movement. US Gold have been quoted describing *Mega Twins* as "mischievous rather than cute", certainly you'll find yourself smiling at your screen long before wiping the sick off it. Wait until you're crisped by a dragon, or see yourself attempting to scramble up a cliff – Phil Cool would be proud of such facial contortions.

"Everything is designed with fantastic attention to detail"

IT TAKES TWO TO TWIN TANGO

The real-gameplay hook is the two-player option though. Yes, there's something heart warming about taking on baddies with a buddy. The race for the power-ups, the arguments over who'll guard the rear and who'll take the front – it's all here. The only crucial ingredient missing is the ability to kill your chum. But hey, it's time we all made an effort to be nice – this is 1991 after all.

The variation in gameplay as the Twins negotiate different terrain relieves what some may otherwise regard as the repetitive hack-slash-jump action. Ever heard of a game called *Sonic The Hedgehog*? Well a lot of what made *Sonic* such a mega-hit on the Sega console can be found here. The humour, graphics you could frame and give to your granny for Christmas and an addictive hook that will keep you coming back time after time.

Still, let's pick faults for a minute. For a start, at times there are too many baddies on screen. It's not something we'd normally complain about, and there's certainly no problem with slow-down, but the fighting does tend to degenerate into brawlish hacking. The swash-buckling babes could perhaps do with a faster elbow-action to cope – and at times sprite collision-detection is a little suspect – but on the whole what *Mega Twins* offers it does well.

In fact, that's the only real problem – what exactly does *Mega Twins* offer? The game design is unarguably both simple and dated. The variations in the gameplay (although well-executed) are all on the same theme, so it could be said that a lack of depth will lead to little long-term appeal. It comes across as a very good conversion of an fairly limited arcade game.

Was that enough criticism? Good. Now I can tell you to forget all that rubbish about depth. (How much depth did *PacMan* or *Space Invaders* have, for goodness sake). Right, *Mega Twins* is great fun to play. *Mega Twins* is cute. *Mega Twins* is a beautiful piece of programming. If cuties are what light up your particular Christmas Tree, then don't miss it. ● ***NEIL WEST***

BUILDING THE PERFECT HERO

Or *heroes*, rather. Whatever, you don't take GCSEs in superhero technique – oh no. Hardship, that's what puts concrete in your stomach and spit in your eye. Just look at what these harmless little chaps have had to go through...

Evil invades the once happy land of Alurea. All living things are crushed under horrible scaly-foot.

All except these two harmless babes, that is. Dragons live for ever, but not so little boys. Fifteen years later...

Ooh! Look how he's grown! Who would have thought..? etc etc. Yes, the twins become big 'n' ard. Player 1 is the eldest.

And player 2 is the younger. In a single-player game, it is the elder brother who's first called into action. But his bro' can enter the fray at any time.

Now it's just the end-of-level Boss. Quite remarkable!

Oh yes, well done (groan). Don't mess with fire-breathing dragons unless you're wearing your asbestos underpants. (I thought all superheroes knew that?)

UPPERS Cute, cuddly and quick. Ultra-smooth graphics complement an inventive game design based on a tried and tested formula. How can it fail?

DOWNERS Well, it could be viewed as a tad repetitive. There's always the argument that a coin-op game designed to provide a quick 20p-gobbling thrill was never intended to provide long-term amusement anyway.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Perhaps not as complete as *Rodland*, but nevertheless a great cute platform romp through beautiful scenery with plenty of variation. The two-player option adds loads, earning *Mega Twins* promotion from the ranks of the merely mediocre into being a recommended purchase for fans of the genre.

78 PERCENT

The first *Lotus* was as celebrated for its two player mode as its ruthless speed. Now the sequel's here, and it's bigger, faster – and's got room enough for *four*!

LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE II

Game: Lotus Turbo Challenge II
Publisher: Gremlin
Price: £24.99
Authors: Shaun Southern with the Magnetic Fields team
Release: Out now

Lotus Turbo Challenge II gives you the chance to drive a beautiful Lotus Elan or Esprit at insane speeds, through exotic locations, without the slightest possibility of either crashing or being stopped by the law. As such you can't help but recommend it in the fun stakes – the AMIGA POWER team are well known for their liberal interpretations of the speed limit at times, but this is real wish fulfilment stuff. If we really drove like we drive *Lotus II* we'd all have been locked up long ago.

Of course, you could say similar things about hundreds of other driving games, couldn't you? Well no, not really – they may or may not be fun (depending on the game), but almost universally they bear precious little relation to the actual act of driving itself. If they've (deservedly, by the way) come in for some stick for being a little bit samey lately, they equally deserve to be slagged for how unrealistic they all are.

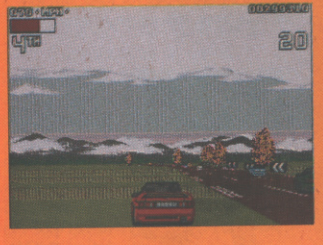
"The best thing is the ability to play against your pals"

Lotus II, on the other hand, while sharing plenty of surface similarities with its peers – the action is presented from your standard behind-view, pseudo-3D perspective, for instance – succeeds in being both great fun in an arcade-style way as well as remarkably true to real driving. In look, feel and ambition it quite confidently leaves its rivals munching on exhaust fumes.

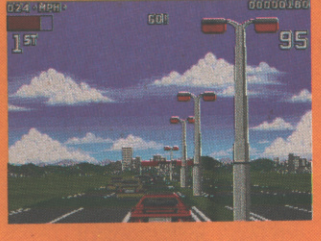
Make no mistake then – this is one much-hyped game that actually turns out to deserve its pre-release reputation. Cynical readers (and of course, cynical journos like ourselves) – even those who

DRIVING IT HOME

If you were good enough to drive straight through the eight levels of this game, it would still take you a good hour – you can't deny that there's plenty to see. Of course, getting through in one go is not something you're likely to do though, not with these tough levels between the start and the finish lines...



The Forest – Nice and gentle English-style country road with few obstacles, except some harmless felled trees and the odd wayward driver. A pleasant drive, if a bit of a deceiving introduction to the rigours to come.

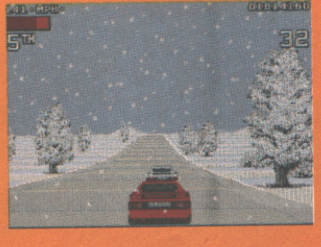


In the city – Possibly the least impressive stage of all. At one stage you're driving along a motorway and avoiding a whole swarm of jugganauts which cut across your road at implausibly placed crossroads – funny, but a bit silly really.

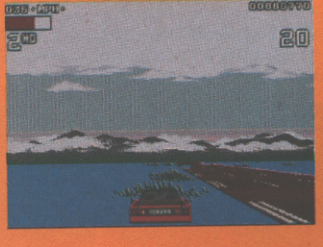
Desert – It's quite easy to get bogged down in the deeper sand at the sides of the road – and if you stray off the course it really might as well be the end of the game – but otherwise not too tricky a level. A good driver will stay in the middle of the road, and survive.

Night time – Placed here more for visual effect than for gameplay considerations, I reckon. It looks gorgeous in every way, with plenty of city lights parallaxing their way across the horizon, but to be honest it's really not all that tricky.

Fog – This is an excellent effect which looks dangerously realistic. The fog alone wouldn't make the course all that tricky though, so more twists and turns have been added here than on earlier stages. Bags of concentration required.

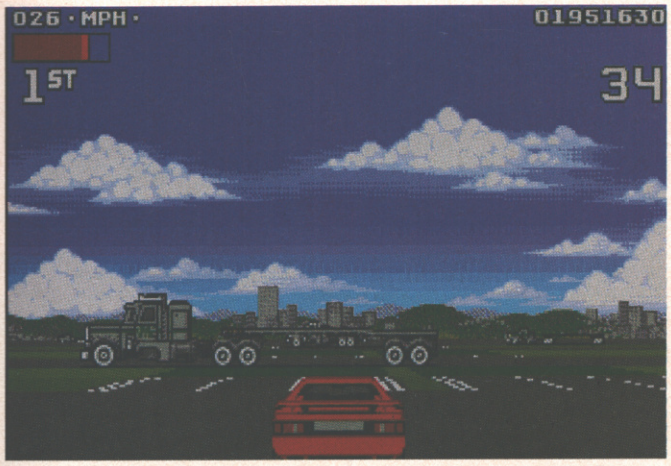


Snow – Yep, you guessed it. The road is far too slippy to go fast, but if you don't you'll never make the checkpoint. The solution? Learn when to hit the pedal , and when to ease off. This section really sorts the 'flat out' merchants from the decent drivers.

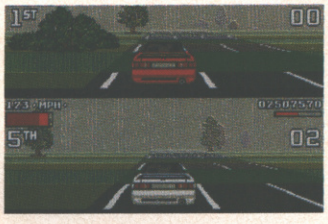


Marshland – Water in the road will slow you down considerably, but if you stray off the track there's every chance your car will get bogged down. The sensation of aqua-planing has been captured admirably on the tarmac bits though.

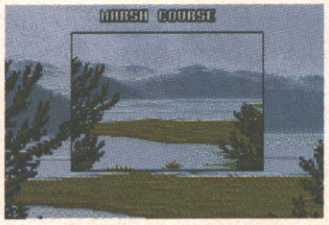
Storm – Easily the best effects of the whole game, with mesmerising rain, and spooky lightning. More obstacles, twists and turns to deal with too. In fact, a satisfyingly difficult last level.

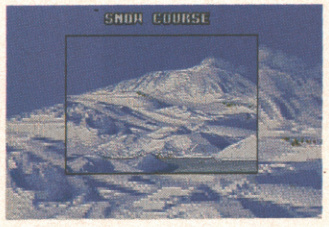


I like trucking: not so much an obstacle, more a challenge. Driving under the trailers elicits a whoop from the driver. (Remember, don't try this one on the M25!)



Play misty for me: working through the fog in one and two-player modes.





Here is just a selection of the classy intro screens that precede a level. Neat touches like this which set it apart from the crowd.

enjoyed the first *Lotus* game – will have taken all the pre-release hype with a lorry load of road-salt, but it seems we needn't have bothered after all. Gremlin have mixed speed with convincing graphics, imagination, a good feel and simple care to produce, I'd say, the best sprite-based driving game ever on the Amiga.

It's a pleasant surprise that this isn't a game in which you're forced to race against dim-witted computer opponents. You can either slog it out with the elements – much like in real fast driving, where you're not actually racing anyone, just trying to get somewhere fast – or take on one, two or even three (!) pals in the split screen or computer link version (more of that later). There's no racetrack as such – this is all out on the open road, and the only way to progress is to get to the checkpoints in time (*OutRun*-style, in fact). In the first levels this is easy-peasy, but later on, with furious weather conditions to cope with, it gets altogether more challenging. Of course there are other cars on the road, but they seem to be about as intelligent as the oil slicks and felled trees that litter the roads. Really they exist merely to get in your way rather than try and beat you.

One trouble with the first *Lotus* was that, despite being a graphically excellent drive, it was badly flawed in the crash recovery department. If you got tangled up with an obstacle, the car would slow to a halt (it wouldn't actually flip upside down though, *OutRun*-style) making getting back into the race a real pain because the blasted car took so long to get itself started again.

Lotus II has fixed that, but in doing so has created some problems of its own. Now you don't stop at all – Lotus (the company) have apparently insisted that none of its expensive kit gets damaged even in computer simulation (the softies) – so instead of bringing you to an abrupt halt, hitting something just makes the control go wibbly and slows you down a bit. This makes the game faster and saves the getting-started-again problem, but equally it makes it difficult to judge just how appaling your mistake was without your keeping a keen eye on the speedo. It's a moot point, but in the end I think I'd say this non-stopping is a good thing – though, of course, it's pretty hard to take a game totally seriously when slamming into a lorry at 140 just slows you down to 20 mph (instead of simply mashing you).

"It's so very arcade-like in speed and smoothness"

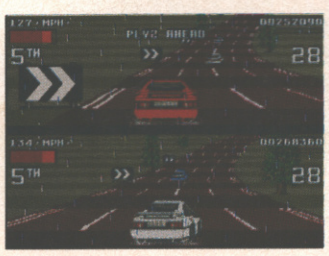
Still, that's all part of what makes it such an unusual game – it's so very arcade-like in speed and smoothness terms, while much of the actual driving experience it's trying to emulate (the way the two different cars handle, say) is so realistic. Unusual, but it works.

The other really unusual thing about the game is the style and range of the weather conditions presented – and how they really affect the way your car handles and you play the game. Throughout though, the cars handle a treat (just different enough from one another to be noticeable), the sweeping descents into valleys and blind hill tops (as in the first game) are as exciting as ever, and, of course, the programmers have made no mistakes with the parallax scrolling. As a one player game it's simply excellent.

That said though, the best, best thing about it is the ability to play against your pals. As we've often said before, computer games are always best when you're trying to whip your buddies, and I reckon this applies especially to driving games. The horizontally split screen option (carried over from the first *Lotus* game) puts you head-to-head against a pal using the same computer without any noticeable loss of speed – I would say that this is the best way to play the game, except a) Stuart beat me every time we played, so there MUST be something wrong and b) if you link two computers with a lead you can either play a friend with a full screen each, or split both screens for four (four!) simultaneous players. It's quite something.

So is it worth buying? Well, yes, of course – it's may not be perfect, but it's probably the most atmospheric game of its kind, and most certainly the most fun. Definitely recommended.

● *COLIN CAMPBELL*



Two player split screen competition.

THOSE LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGES I & II DIFFERENCES IN FULL

● In the first Lotus the two player option split the screen horizontally.
● In Lotus II, you've still got that, PLUS a cable link allows two computers to be joined and four players to join in!

● In the first Lotus you only got the chance to use half the screen in one-player mode.
● In Lotus II the whole screen is used for one player.

● In Lotus I you got to drive the ultra-fast Lotus Esprit Turbo.
● In Lotus II you get the Esprit plus the new Lotus Elan to drive, a slightly slower car, but one which manages to hang on in the corners better.

● In Lotus I, your car was red and all the computer controlled cars were white – fine, except in two player mode both humans controlled red cars.
● In the new Lotus game there's a much wider range of car colours (based on the real Lotus colour range, in fact).

● The first game was based on your racing around a series of circuits.
● The new game is based on a stage system, much more like OutRun, which built into a sort-of illegal road race across America.

● The first game was entirely special weather effects free.
● The programmers have added as many effects as they can to the new one, the best in any Amiga driving game. They're not just there for visual effect either – they actually change the way the car handles and the way you play the game.

UPPERS Gorgeous graphics, lashings of speed and that hard-to-capture real driving atmosphere – especially when you're up against human opponents. The most together traditional-style driving game yet.

DOWNERS Suffers a little from *Lotus*' insistence on banning any crash sequences. And there aren't any decent maps to tell you how close you are to the next checkpoint, either.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Amiga has suffered from plenty of disappointments when it comes to driving games. *Lotus II* is not one of them. (In fact, it's rather excellent).

87 PERCENT

Game: Robocod
Publisher: Millennium
Price: £24.99
Author: Chris Sorrell
Release: Late November

ROB

Millennium just keep on punning with their s fight against evil. This time James Pond h

There's been something of a fuss made lately over a Sega MegaDrive game called *Sonic The Hedgehog* – you may have heard about it. The praise is well deserved because *Sonic* is (in my book anyway) quite simply the best arcade game ever released for any console or home computer. It's very pretty, very fast and has bags of character – I mention this because many Amiga owners will have tried *Sonic*, and wondered about Sega's well documented refusal to release this on any hardware format other than Sega's own. US Gold have been in there pitching for the Amiga rights, but as things currently stand they haven't had much luck. It's looks as if Sega have got what they want – the underlying message is: "If you want to play something as good as *Sonic*, buy a Megadrive." Sound commercial sense you might say. I say, knickers to Sega.

Amiga producers are perfectly capable of conjuring up games that are just as good and just as fast as Sega's, and you don't have to go to Tokyo to find the necessary talent. Try Cambridge.

Robocod, like *Sonic*, is a colourful arcade platform romper with treasures to collect, kinda cute bad guys to bump off, and levels to complete. Yes, it's a formula that's been tried and tested so many times that it's on the verge of a cardiac arrest . But *Robocod* is different, because, well, because it's so different. It's almost as if the author sat down before he started and decided to re-write the rules of Amiga arcade platform games. Lord knows, we need something new.

James Pond is once again the hero character, but this time he's a fish with a metal suit (*Robocod* – geddit?) packed full of special attributes which would probably prove essential to all good fish heroes. Chief among these is his ability to move safely around in the open air without flapping about a bit and then making like a Sainsbury's Rainbow Trout.

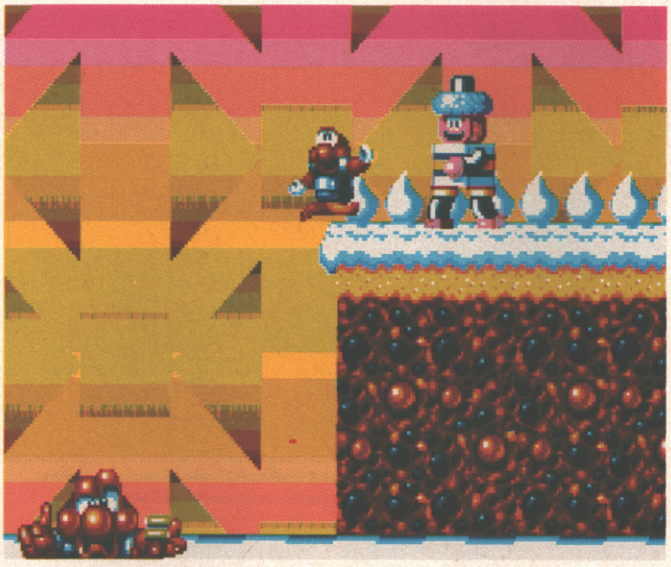
In the original *James Pond*, our hero was out to find the evil Doc Maybe, and stop him polluting the sea (cue huge environmental yawn from readers). Now Maybe has toddled off with all Pond's penguin pals, and our hero has had to surface in order to get his buddies back. All that environmental nonsense has been trashed in favour of good old fashioned fun – and what could be more fun than a game set largely in a huge factory which produces sweets, toys, presents and other desirable consumer products?

In fact, the game is built up of eight levels, each of which is based on a product theme. The first (and easiest) is all cuddly toys, while the second is centred around sports gear. While the game progresses we move into the territory of musical goods, bath toys, cakes, card and board games, sweets and mechanical playthings. As you can imagine, this little lot leaves plenty of room for a delightful and ever changing panorama of graphical tricks, humourous touches, novel bad-guys and – best of all – capricious game-play.

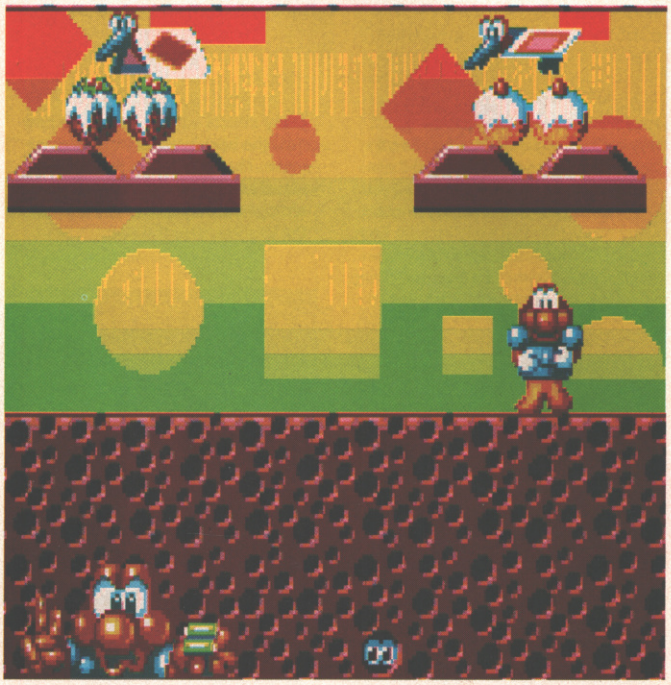
And that's not all. This is a game that's not just big, not just huge – it's bloody gigantic. Each of the eight factories includes between three and eight levels, and very few of them are linear. You really have to explore, and even if you're getting a little bit lost, there're always lots and lots of good things to pick up and puzzles to solve. On each level there'll be a few of those penguins I mentioned before – to clear the level, you have to pick up a pre-designated number of your flightless chums, then find the exit (handily signposted by an 'exit' sign).

It's really not all that difficult to skip through the game, pick up the nice guys, and make for the next factory. But here's where *Robocod* is special – there are just so many jokes in the game, so much devilish chicanery, that you can't resist having a look round another corner, or climbing a huge series of platforms. It's all the more enticing because of the hero's large repetoire of movements. Of course (of *course*?) he can walk along on those odd little tail fins of his, and he can crouch and jump too. So far, so ordinary – what's much stranger is the way he can also stretch his robot body up to reach platforms, thus enabling him to swing along on his little fishy hands beneath them. He can bounce on top of baddies too, and whizz down hills at quite a lick (in much the same fashion as You-Know-Who-The-Hedgehog, actually).

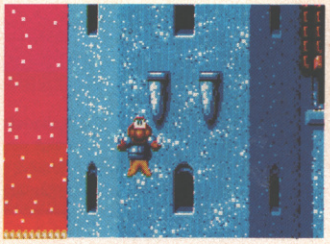
On each level the style of gameplay changes, and Pond's array of movements will often change to suit the new environment. There's a secret room that's made of jelly for instance, and of course Pond finds a way to deal with the difficulties this presents. Sometimes there are little gadgets which will give him extra capabilities (a set of wings, a car, a plane,



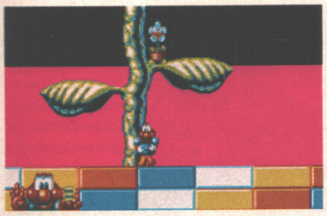
Play one game too many and you'll go Bertie! There are some suspiciously familiar faces that keep cropping up in the wonderful world of *Robocod* confectionery.



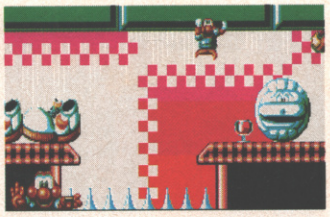
Why have cotton, when you can have silk? *Robocod* has a soft, chocolotey centre which you simply don't find in most arcade platformers. And – get this! – it's got real wit too!



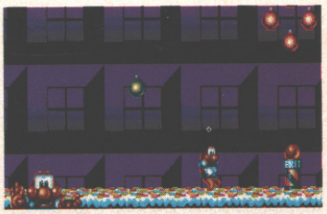
On a cold winter's day – dig that groovy snow! – the metal-scaled one prepares to enter the surreal, giant scale lair of Doc Maybe. But which of the many doors shall we try?



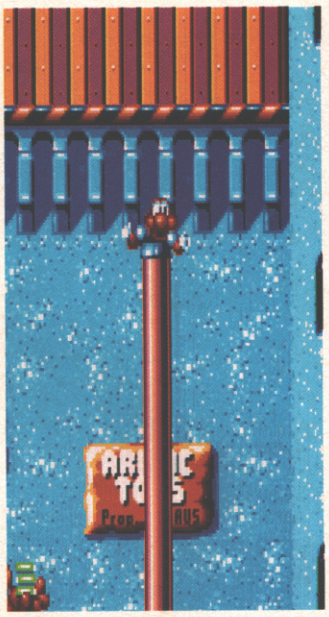
James and the beanstalk in legoland. This is actually the bottom portion of one of those sunglasses-wearing dancing flowers.



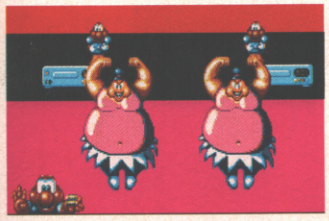
With a grip of iron *Robocod* swings his way over those dangerous spikes, and some... sports equipment?



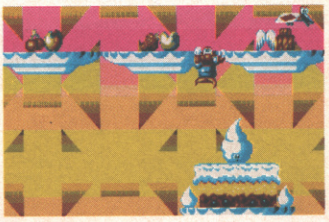
This sweet little bonus screen is just one of the many delights to be found in the maze-like castle.



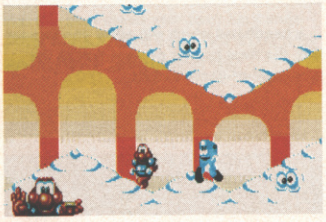
Going up! James can extend his torso almost indefinately, then grip onto handy platforms. Who need lifts anyway?



Now this room *is* freaky. Everything is reflected vertically down the middle of the screen. Sussing out which cod is the real one isn't as easy as it sounds.



Who says James can't have his cake and eat it? One quick swing, and he can use those wings lying on that platform.



Speeding up and down slippery ice cream hills gives an effect very similar to that of a certain famous hedgehog.

BOCOD

their second fishy tale of a do-gooding aquatic invertibrate and his nd has grown a robot body – and got about three times better!

and so on), and while few of these tricks are original, it's a rarity to find them all together in one game.

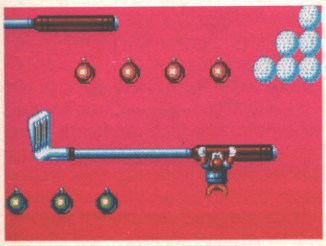
They haven't been squeezed in here either. The game is blessed with absolutely loads of room to move around in, suffering from none of that feeling of claustrophobia which haunts even some of the best Amiga platformers (*Toki* and *Magic Pockets* being recent examples that spring to mind).

The trouble with the first *James Pond* game was that it was all so samey, and not a little difficult. By level four you were so bored, it didn't seem worthwhile investing all that much time on levels which were becoming increasingly, even ludicrously, challenging. In the yet-to-be-established (though we'd really like it to) tradition of sequel writers listening to the complaints of gamers, this wee problem has been resolved for the new game. Pond carries three batteries (he's a cyborg fish, remember) and while he possesses at least one, he can't die. If you bump into a baddie, you lose a battery. This isn't so bad because there are enough batteries lying around to run a fair sized airport, let alone a small fish – add this to your three lives, AND three 'Game Continues' and even the crappest of gamesplayer will have quite some fun romping around this game for some time (even if they don't get anywhere very much). The game's big, you see – in something like *Toki*, you'd have the whole thing finished in no time with those little extras, but *Robocod* is so darned ginormous that this is most unlikely, even for the sharpest of games player.

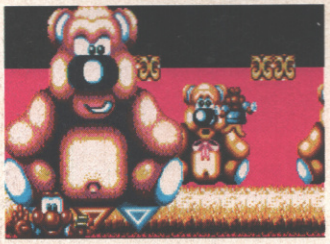
"The programmer has shamelessly plundered every suitable game in existence for new ideas"

I suppose gameplay is the most important part of it (it always is, isn't it?) but for me what carries this off is the sheer audacity of the thing. Programmer Chris Sorrell has shamelessly plundered every suitable game in existence for new ideas, and he's had the cheek to even tease a few a little (watch out for some neat *Lemmings* and *Rainbow Islands* gags). He's also had the good sense to raid popular culture, and there's everything here from 19th century literature through 1930s cinema to tacky chocolate bar advertisements. We're always complaining about games lacking any real wit or imagination, but from the punning title downwards this is packed with it. It would be wrong for me to spoil the fun – and anyway, you've really got to be there to enjoy the jokes – but let's just say that the incidental characters, the gentle touches of background wit, and the perplexingly ingenious nature of so many of the different levels make *Robocod* fun-time classic, and a surprise one at that.

I'm going to step onto hallowed ground now and say a very dangerous thing. When all is said and done, and all angles are considered, I reckon, without prejudice, that this just might (and I stress just might) be better than *Rainbow Islands*. There, I said it. Now buy *Robocod*, decide for yourself, and may God blow my trousers off if I'm wrong.
Kaboom. Oh, ouch. (Ahem).
● *COLIN CAMPBELL*



Ball sports for all: James finds the going tough, but he's got swinging off to a tee.



Cuddly as an atom bomb: death by teddy bear is *not* a pleasant proposition.

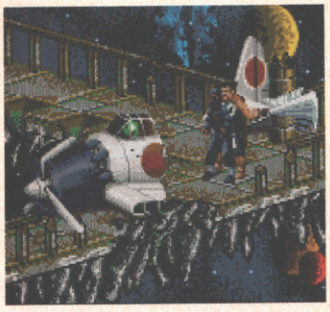
UPPERS Superbly crafted platformer that kicks the genre right up the backside. It's what we've all been waiting for.

DOWNERS Well, all right then, maybe it's *not* quite as good as *Rainbow Islands*. But damn close!

THE BOTTOM LINE

One of the best games we've ever seen. It's original, without being clever-clever. It's funny, but with stacks of gameplay. And it's challenging without being impossible. Good times guaranteed!

87 PERCENT



This crashed Zero contains the spirit of a trapped airman. Free him, and he'll reward you with something useful...

... a headband which will allow you to pass this, the final barrier on your way to the giant end-of-game baddie.

And here you are at the end of everything. This pleasant and sociable chap throws fireballs from his eyes – you'll need to play him at his own game to defeat him.

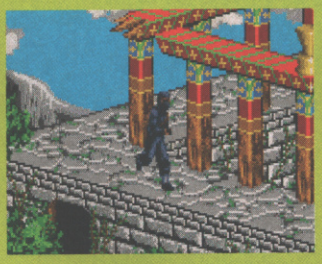
LAST NIN

When is a Last Ninja not a Last Ninja? When it spawns countless sequels that's w

THE FOUR ELEMENTS (PLUS A COUPLE MORE)

The six levels of *Ninja 3* represent the four traditional elements (earth, air, fire, water) with a couple of extra ones System 3 have thrown in quite gratuitously to pad it out. What nice boys.

Level one is the Earth level – in this pic you can see the end boss, who wields an enormous club as his subtle means of dissuading you from leaving.



Level two is Wind – much of the action takes place on precarious platforms on the edge of cliffs. In the corner, you can see the Wind boss too, but don't try and tackle him from this position.

Level three is Water and it's, er, wet. This stage features all the stuff you'd expect – waterfalls, whirlpools, erm, streams (and the like).

Level four is Fire, characterised by lots of bubbling lava, methane gas and so on (so add burning to the long list of ways in which to meet your maker).

Level five, the Limbo level, is set on lots of platforms suspended in space on nothing very much at all – so watch your step near the edges!

Level six, or Void, is the ultimate level of the game, and takes place in a void (so no surprises there). Mind you, the Sunday Sport might be interested in some of the things you'll come across...

Game: Last Ninja 3
Publisher: System 3
Price: £25.99
Author: Dave Collins (programming), Phil Thornton, Robin Levy, Dokk (artwork), Reyn Ouwehand and Sonix Systems (sound)
Release: Out now

Okay, let's get something clear from the start, so nobody whinges about it later on. None of us here have ever cared much for System 3's immensely successful *Last Ninja* series. While undeniably gorgeous-looking, we all found them largely unplayable due to the appallingly unwieldy control system and the nit-pickingly finicky positioning required for many important moves.

System 3 say they've taken such criticism on board for this final (?) game, making it far more user-friendly, while at the same time fiddling around with many of the basic parameters. The simple problem-solving and beat-'em-upping action of old has been superceded by a design which the company claims will appeal to console gamers and RPG fans

"The levels are all largely featureless, characterless affairs"

as well as devotees of the earlier titles.

How do they intend to do this? Well, they've played fairly fast and loose with relative graphic sizes, and made the object manipulation much more complicated, which accounts for much of it. Where in the old games you'd have found a key and opened a door with it, in *Last Ninja 3* you have to find a fire, collect some bellows to pump it up with, get a key mould, pick up some metal to actually make the key from, and finally use a flux substance to help with the melting process! (*Then* you have to find the door...) While this may be stretching the definition of RPG a little bit, it's certainly a bit more involved than the bonehead antics *Ninja* fans are used to.

"The game drips with attention to detail"

So anyway, after all this guff what do we have? *Ninja 3* is played over six levels with an elemental link – each stage is themed on either earth, wind, water, fire, or 'void', with an extra 'limbo' stage before the last of those. Great care has been taken with the plot and background in order to keep the atmosphere intact all the way through, and the game drips with attention to detail. The movie-like intro sequence is a particularly impressive example of this, showing the ninja creeping up on a castle, stealthily scaling the wall and breaking the neck of the guard on the battlements, all accompanied by striking music and broken up by credits in a truly cinematic style. All this, in addition to the chunky manual and the general presentation, is a laudable attempt by System 3 to give the paying customer a complete package for their £26, something which many other software houses could learn from (we've seen some truly tragic packaging lately, with Ocean's *Darkman* and Domark's *Thunderjaws* being just a couple of the worst offenders), but it'll all count for nothing if the game isn't any good. So without further ado, let's find out if it isn't...

First impression – 'So what's new?' *Ninja 3*'s much-vaunted new user-friendly control system is, in operation, not significantly different from how it used to be. There's no escaping it, and no amount of protesting from System 3 will change the fact. Moving still seems to be a haphazard and inconsistent affair, with the same joystick move often appearing to have radically different effects. The number of times I sent my ninja plummetting off the edge of a narrow walkway to his death instead of charging heroically towards an enemy was... 56. You're more or less okay as long as you keep moving, but the control is so un-instinctive that as soon as you stand still, you completely forget which stick movement corresponds to which direction. The ninja frequently refuses to face the direction you want him to, ending up back-pedalling furiously into a sword-wielding samurai and getting himself slashed to pieces while you scream obscenities at the hopeless cretin.

Second impression – 'What happened to the lovely graphics, then?' While *Ninja III* is undeniably extremely pretty, the superb atmosphere of the original games has been lost. The levels are all largely featureless, characterless affairs, lacking the unique feel of, say, the New York streets of the first *Last Ninja* (if you see what I mean). There's another problem with the graphics, too – the screens are often so packed with detail that parts of the playing area are totally obscured, which is a severe pain when you're wandering around in one of them and you get attacked by a baddie. Trying to fight someone using *Ninja 3*'s control system when you can't even see which way you're facing (or indeed exactly where you are) is a dead loss and no mistake.

"Last Ninja 3 is undoubtedly the best game in the series"

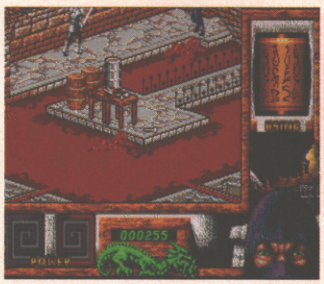
Third impression – 'Call yourself a ninja, you big girl's blouse?' It's all very well saying the graphic scaling has been fiddled with to give the whole thing a big butch console feel, but seeing your ninja fall a distance which looks like four feet and dying from the impact is unavoidably silly. Also silly is not being able to walk across grass – what is he, allergic or something? If the ninja's path is going to be restricted, there should at least be some kind of nominal fence or wall or something to mark the impasse – it just looks daft for your ruff'n'tuff superhero to have to walk round miles of pathway in order to avoid stepping on a daisy.

Fourth impression – 'Take the what and the what and do what with them?' Now we come to the 'RPG' element. This is really pushing things a bit. Picking stuff up and making other stuff out of it, fine, but since most of the answers to problems are handed to you pretty much on a plate (they're mostly too obscure for you to expect players to work them out for themselves to any significant extent), calling *Ninja 3* a role-playing game is like calling *R-Type II* a wargame because there's shooting in it.

Fifth impression – 'Not two stools, but three'. As previously mentioned, System 3 are hoping to appeal to three distinct types of game player with this release. I think, though, they're in serious danger of landing uncomfortably somewhere in the rocky middle ground. Console-type players will be put off by the awkward controls and the tedious mucking around with puzzles, RPG punters will laugh their heads off at the merest suggestion that this is one of 'their' games, and *Last Ninja*-lovers may feel that the concentrated focus of the previous titles has been lost.

Sounds like a bit of a disaster, doesn't it? Well, no, that isn't really the case. *Last Ninja 3* is undoubtedly the best game in the series, and I'm quite certain that it will sell huge numbers of copies. What I'm not so sure about is that it'll sell as many as System 3 would like it to – it could just be that *The Last Ninja*'s time has finally passed. The game-buying public knows what it wants from its software these days, and a title which tries to be all things to all people may find itself ending up being nothing very much to anyone. ● *STUART CAMPBELL*

Glass kneecaps or what? Can you believe that this shot shows your rock-hard ninja about half-a-second before his death from this singularly unimpressive fall?



This room is full of deadly gas, but it can be negotiated. You'll have to use The Force, though... (Cryptic, eh?)

Creeping stealthily along, in the hope that the other ninja won't spot me. It's a pity the Last Ninja can't swim, otherwise I could have done some sneaking around underwater.

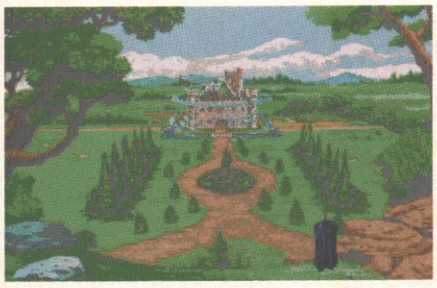
UPPERS Very stylish graphics, excellent presentation, and less faffing around than the earlier efforts (instant switching between screens, for one thing).

DOWNERS The control system is still crap, there are some careless design flaws, and the spark of originality which characterised its predecessors is gone.

THE BOTTOM LINE

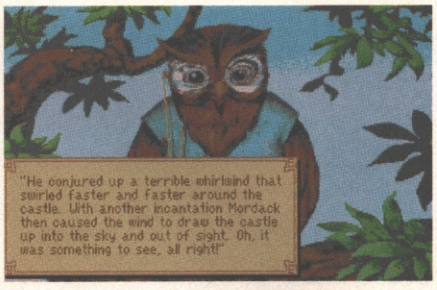
It'll sell a lot of copies, and there's a lot to be said in its favour, but to be honest it doesn't do very much for the AMIGA POWER team at all. For everyone who *isn't* like us though, it's probably worth...

80 PERCENT



Hey, I say. What are you doing to King Graham's castle?

Don't waste time talking to the little birdies, you silly sausage – go after that evil wizard instead!



Oh, a talking owl. Very handy (if a bit longwinded). I can feel some fairy dust coming on.

The row of icons along the top can be used to move, look, talk, save the game, change graphical detail and go to the inventory screen. Alternatively, the most commonly used commands can be cycled through with the right mouse button.

Game: King's Quest V
Publisher: Sierra
Price: £39.99
Author: Roberta Williams
Release: Late November

There're three things you really ought to know about *Kings Quest V*. One – it looks great. Two – the plot is sickeningly clichéd. Three – it's actually really jolly good. What? I've got to write some more? Oh, go on – alright then.

Never being one for plot (but to understand some of my criticisms you kinda need to know it) the quick resumé goes something like this: King Graham wanders along, picking some flowers (and his nose for all I know), whence comes forth the cry, "Hey, who stole my castle?". At this point he meets an owl who explains how an evil wizard has destroyed the castle (stop laughing back there), and so (quite naturally) sprinkles King Graham with fairy dust, allowing him to fly to the land of Serenia, in order to defeat the evil wizard. Ho hum. The last time I saw a plot this original was watching the A-Team.

KING'S

Sierra make a renewed bid for the top of the adventure tree, but can they shake

They're certainly making an effort – these new releases, aimed right at hard disk

Game: Rise Of The Dragon
Publisher: Sierra
Price: £34.99
Author: Dynamix
Release: Out now

I've spent the last few minutes trying unsuccessfully to work out how to get my word processor to do those French 'e's with accents over them. The trouble is that the word 'cliche' looks a bit silly without one, so trying to review a game as ridden with the things as this could be slightly tricky. I'll just have to think of a different word, I suppose. 'Stereotype', maybe, or 'hackneyed'. Either one could be applied (with the aid of a few judicious prepositions) to *Rise Of The Dragon*, which combines the tritest of murder-mystery/P.I./futuristic plots with a distinctly run-of-the-mill icons/graphic-adventure/cinemawossname interface, yet somehow manages to come out of it looking like a pretty impressive game.

My name's Hunter, Blade Hunter. I'm a sci-fi film noir kind of guy.

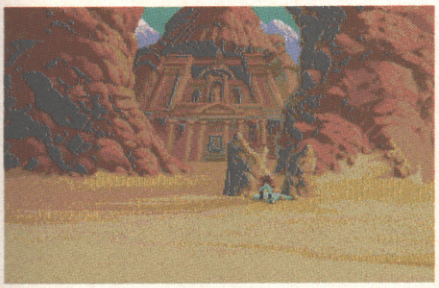
RISE OF

"It's not quite first-rate, but it's up there with the best of the second-rate ones"

The storyline takes the usual pessimistic computer-game view of the future: drugs and crime have taken over, dry ice wafts menacingly down the dimly-lit streets and everyone dresses in leather thongs. Nothing unusual there, but the mayor has got something more serious on his mind. His daughter's been killed by some 'bad dope' and, fearing something sinister's afoot but wishing to keep the incident quiet, he's asked private investigator William 'Blade' Hammer to look into it. Unknown to 'Blade', however, he's about to take on more than he bargained for. The trouble is (it says here) that, as prophesied, the one known as 'The Dragon' has returned to restore chaos to the universe and rule once more.

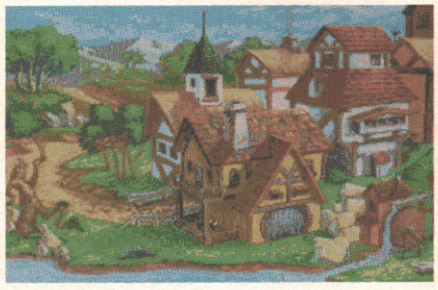
WELCOME TO THE NEW JUNGLE

The game kicks off in Blade's apartment, and follows the usual course of examining things, picking them up, operating them, moving from location to location and interacting with



The desert can be a dangerous place. It can get far too easy to expire from all sorts of things. Thirst for one...

...vicious bandit for another. The choice is yours, really.



The town of Serenia. Go there to talk shop, do some shopping, or maybe just roam the streets.

S QUEST V

F THE DRAGON

off their old image and compete with the likes of Lucasfilm and Delphine? owners, come with vastly improved presentation – but can the stories keep up?

Sierra have pulled their socks up quite nicely for their latest batch of releases. Gone are the insufferably bad text parsers (everything is now achieved with a wonderfully simple point-and-click interface) and the drawn-by-a-three-year-old-esque graphics (backgrounds are now hand-painted, then digitised). Gone, basically are most of the terrible bits, to be replaced by shining examples of user-friendliness, and slick presentation. *King's Quest V* is really up there with the best in this respect. If only they'd forsaken the crap plots too. Then Sierra would maybe, just maybe have had a *Monkey Island* beater on their hands. As it is they've got an ideal stepping stone to go on to even greater and more ambtious heights.

SEE THE WOOD FOR THE TWEE

The entire game is played via a cursor and a few pop-up icons, a system simpler even than Lucasfilm's, yet probably just as effective. Movement is simply a matter of pointing to a position on-screen, and the hero (yes, I know King Graham isn't a very heroic name) will work his own way around the scenery (much like in *Monkey Island*, in fact). This is much more preferable to some adventures I've seen, where the characters play dumb, and can't work out how to reach areas of the screen unless guided every bit of the way. Actually, despite the Lucasfilm-isms of the games exterior, *King's Quest V* is remarkably old-fashioned when it comes to the basic plot and the way the puzzles and locations are structured. It would be fair to say, in fact, that the actual adventure is less advanced than the ancient (but nonetheless excellent) Infocom games. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. An adventure can be quite basic so long as its well designed and pretty logical. Thankfully *King's Quest V* succeeds in this area. Simple but neat sums it up nicely.

"My only reservations lie with the game content"

That's not to say that *King's Quest V* is without faults. One thing about adventures is that overall game quality is inextricably linked to the quality of plot. *King's Quest V* doesn't do itself any favours here. Fairy tale clichés abound, and when the package promises ➞

other characters in the hope of solving the mystery. However, unlike the majority of other cinemawhatchacallit games, you don't get to see your character on screen. Instead you see the world through Blade's eyes, which opens the way for a series of attractively drawn stills, with a little decorative animation in each, rather than a *Monkey Island*-style animated extravaganza. It's a question of taste, of course, but I tend to find that the approach used here can reduce a game to a string of graphical setpieces with not much in between.

Scale is the other thing that sets *Rise Of The Dragon* apart from everything else. It comes on (gulp) ten (10!) disks, and incredibly manages to arrange it so that you'll need just about all of them in the first five minutes of playing. This is clearly a ridiculous state of affairs, even if you've got two disk drives, and a hard drive is an absolute must. Even then, you'll need to find about eight (8!) megabytes of space on it, which is nearly half an A590. Have these people never heard of data compression? Hmm? Needless to say, to play the game at all you'll need at least 1 Meg of memory, and to play the game at its best this all ought to be Chip RAM.

Staggering statistics, then, but does the game justify them? It's easy to get to grips with, you've got to give it that. Although there's yet another system of mouse clicks to learn, it's picked up fairly quickly and proves to be fast and effective in practice. The game isn't let down on the programming front, either. Everything looks neat and tidy, and works as it should, and there are plenty of ➞

Ahem. In case you're wondering what the little 'bloke' icon at the bottom does, it calls up the inventory.

The inventory. Here's where you pick things up, put them down again and, erm, 'wear' them.

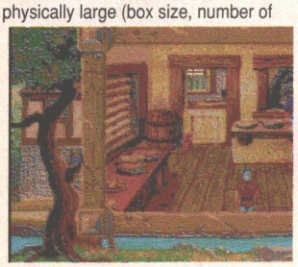
Hi. (Blimey – this has never happened before. What do I do?) Um, your eyes are like pools of... oh crumbs.

A weeping willow? Don't let here harp on about it. Not everyone gets the frog treatment.

Some inns are just so cosy, warm and hospitable. Then there's this one. Just don't let it get you all tied up.

You may not like ants, but they're pretty fascinating creatures, and – hey! – they have their uses too.

'enjoyment for all the family', a bout of retching isn't too far off. The game's actually pretty small, too. That's not to say that there isn't much long-term appeal in there, but in terms of actual locations and puzzles to solve, I can't help but feel reminded of 16k adventures on the Spectrum. This is obviously partly down to the use of digitised graphics in every location, but for a product which is so physically large (box size, number of disks, chest measurements), I would have expected a bigger game in there.



Through the square window we see... Graham in the pie shop!

Roll right up for that usual *Monkey Island* comparison. Whereas *Monkey Island* felt like a totally interactive graphic affair, *King's Quest V* relies upon it's graphic-based nature for command execution but little else. I get the feeling that most of the game (and puzzles) could have been implemented purely using text. There are a few exceptions (such as the ravine-hopping sequence and the way some of the objects are hidden in the scenery) but things feel a little too 'static'. Maybe this has something to do with the lack of cinematic trickery which made *Monkey Island* and *Cruise For A Corpse* such a delight to watch.

"Simple but neat sums it up nicely"

One other thing which I haven't really mentioned yet is the use of a hard drive. Don't even consider buying this game unless you own one. Disk access is necessary at every location, so even hard drive owners are going to spend a little time tapping their fingers.

It's nice to see Sierra getting their act together. They've trailed behind Lucasfilm and Delphine for a couple of years now, but with *Kings Quest V* and *Rise Of The Dragon* they've made massive steps towards 'fully interactive entertainment' (or whatever it is the Americans call it). The graphics, the sound, and the whole presentation trip are finally up to the standard of what Amiga owners expect in '91. My only reservations lie with the game content. Still, I must admit that despite my normal loathing of all things pretty and twee, I enjoyed *Kings Quest V* no end.

So, hard drive owners, dive on in.

● *MARK RAMSHAW*

UPPERS Superb digitised landscapes, excellent presentation and a genuinely effective control system make *King's Quest V* easy to get into, and fun once you're there. A Sierra high point.

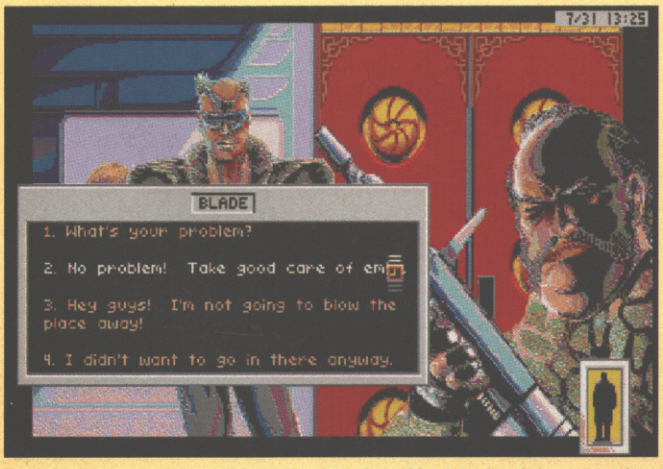
DOWNERS A hard drive is a must, and I wish Sierra would get some decent script-writers in. Lucasfilm are still running rings around them when it comes to the actual plot.

THE BOTTOM LINE

An impressive (but not quite classic) graphical adventure which meets the high standards set by recent releases. Although not essential, it could prove a handy stop-gap before the new Lucasfilm releases turn up.

83 PERCENT

"Scale is the other thing that sets *Rise Of The Dragon* apart from everything else"



We've just been asked to check in our gun by a chap with a huge futuristic pump-action rifle thingy. Are we going to a) argue, b) co-operate meekly, c) crack a pathetic 'joke', or d) just sneak quietly off? Um, good idea.

THE FLEXIBLY LINEAR APPROACH

Despite its boast of being highly flexible, with all sorts of possible outcomes to each situation, the game does tend to push you in the direction it wants you to go in most of the time – you can't actually do very much that lies outside the scope of the plot. You can only talk to people the game wants you to talk to, and you can only say what it wants you to say (with a few multiple-choices, but the choices are usually pretty ridiculous with one obvious one you're meant to pick). Try to pull out your gun in a place where the programming doesn't allow for it and you'll be given a totally crap reason for your not being able to do so.

On the plus side, you do have the freedom to roam around the game's locations at will, but actually making progress generally involves finding the next 'thing' that needs to be done.

Happily, my fault-finding didn't get much further. I was suitably impressed by the graphics (a vast improvement on standard Sierra fare) and engrossed by the puzzles, and delighted to find that Alt M switches off the music. It's not quite a first-rate cinemathingumy game, but is definitely up there with the best of the second-rate ones. Whether you think it's worth spending all that money on, however, is entirely up to you.

● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

'extras' like your VidPhone which is sort of an answering machine with pictures – and a couple of arcade sequences. There is one problem, though, and it's one which is perhaps only to be expected.

UPPERS Good graphics, plenty of atmosphere, 'intelligent' characters, 85 detail-packed locations and a fair amount of suitably absorbing gameplay.

DOWNERS A bit limiting on what you can actually do, which is a major flaw in a game of this size. Startlingly unoriginal. Oh, and the hard diskless can forget it.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you're looking for a fresh, innovative graphic adventure, one with a twist, you'd better look elsewhere. But if you just want something big, solid and dependable to get your teeth into, and aren't too worried by the likelihood of having seen it all before, this would probably do fine.

79 PERCENT

Knightmare

"You are setting forth into another place, another time, another world," said Treguard, The Dungeon Master. "And what makes you think that you four mere mortals will succeed in the Quest, when so many others have failed?"

I understood, at that moment, that our mission was going to take all our endurance, all our collective skill, and, most of all a depth of courage, that I wasn't sure we possessed.

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Tony Crowther's amazing re-creation has everything.

Using the same game system that made 'Captive' adventure game of the year for 1990, 'Knightmare' makes dungeons and dragons games seem like newts splashing around in a muddy puddle.

'Knightmare' is a sophisticated role-playing adventure where you are challenged to solve complex puzzles, logic problems and riddles that reveal a rich, ever-more rewarding storyline.

Your journey takes you deep into the dungeons of Dunshelm, to a cataclysmic meeting with Lord Fear and the unthinkably horrible FrightKnight.

Whether or not the meeting is terminal is up to you. You will need wisdom, tenacity, alacrity and, above all, courage.

But you have all those things, don't you...?

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To keep up with the inexorable advancement of technology, Domark have heavily up

MIG-29M SUPER FULCRUM

Game: MiG 29M Super Fulcrum
Publisher: Domark
Price: £39.99
Author: David Payne, Jonathan Newth and Chris Tubbs at Simis
Release: Out now

It may seem slightly odd for Domark to be releasing another MiG-29 simulation less than a year after their original game of very nearly the same name, but there is some justification. Since the first fighter game – simply *MiG-29 Fulcrum* – popped onto our screens, the aircraft's Russian manufacturer Mikoyen has built a faster, more advanced machine called (you may have guessed by now) the MiG-29M Super Fulcrum. And it makes a pretty sexy subject for a flight sim – the plane's as good (if not better) than anything the Americans have got, by all accounts; it's got an air of mystery about it; and it's fun turning the tables on the normal flight sim set up where MiGs are depicted as cannon fodder, flown by horrible Communists or the pawns of brutal Middle Eastern dictators.

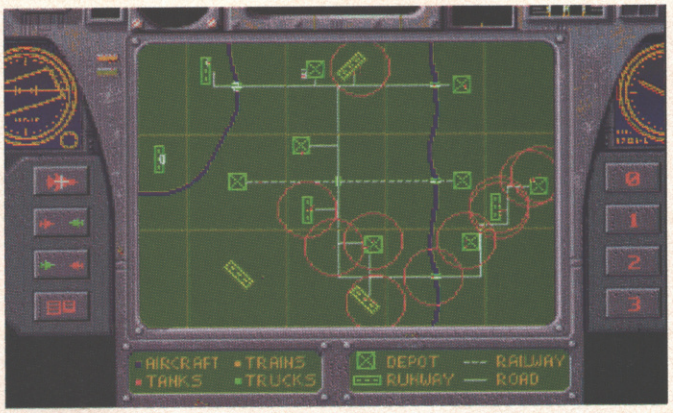
There is a problem with this, of course. I mentioned that the plane's got an air of mystery about it, but that's understating it a bit – I don't suppose anybody outside of the Soviet airforce, the CIA or similar really know all that much about it at all. It's hard to simulate something when you don't know what it can do, which means guesswork is going to come into things rather more than is ideal. A big problem for programmers Simis, then, despite their British Aerospace backgrounds – until you realise that the guys at MicroProse or wherever never really know all that much about the real capabilities of western fighters either. No matter whose sim it is, we have to take a lot on trust and treat it as a game, which is what it is. The bottom line has to be not how supposedly accurate or non-accurate it is, but how much fun it is to play.

WHAT'S NEW IN MILITARY JETS?

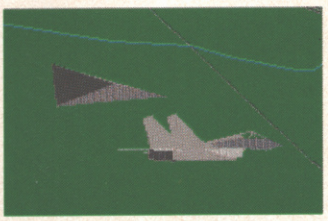
The problem with the first *MiG 29* – for people like us who are games players, not hardcore military hardware freaks – was that it was ultimately too techie and concerned with scrupulous accuracy, and not enough into being simple fun to use. The shortage of missions and severe lack of ground detail – all too often the flat blue sky and flat green ground made it look like nothing so much as a Speccy game – meant our interest flagged fast, and we'd go looking for our thrills in *F-15 Strike Eagle II*, *Their Finest Hour* or *F-29*.

Hardcore flight sim fans tended to disagree though – despite the initially dull look it was actually faster and smoother than just about anything else, handled beautifully and had very realistic (in as much as any of us can tell what 'realistic' is) dog fights. A game more for the expert armchair pilot than the shoot-'em-up freaks amongst us, then.

So how's this new game different? Well, if you boot up both *MiG* games and play them side by side (the joy of having lots of office Amigas!) there's no doubting that the sequel boasts more power and speed than the first game – and that's actually saying something. You've got a full electronic Head Up Display too – instead of the old (and quaintly old fashioned) analogue style instruments of the first game – and generally it comes across as a more sophisticated fly.



All those green symbols are bad guys. Looks as though we've got our work cut out for ourselves. (Better have a nice cup of tea before we get started).



Ground detail is pretty scant, but there's enough around to make navigation and bearing a simple enough exercise. Note the impressive graphical representation of the actual MiG.

It's not just the plane that's been tweaked either. Instead of flying a set rota of missions, our pilot is now involved in a full scale military confrontation set in a South American country, threatened by some bully beef of a neighbour. As the war progresses so does his (ie your) role in the peace keeping force, the narrative link making each mission seem more involving because you know it all adds up in the general scheme of things. That this is an interesting twist on events, and a vast improvement on the first game, there's little doubt.

Perhaps more exciting however is the new two computer link option, allowing you to fly head to head combat against a mate. I couldn't actually get this function to work the time I tried it, but there's every possibility that I was just being crap, and forgot to put the right lead into the right socket or something. (Actually I have never yet been able to link two computers for a game without the whole operation turning into a fiasco). The manual is hardly illuminating on this subject so I gave up after a couple of hours of trying – let's just

SUPER FULCRUM: FIVE THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW

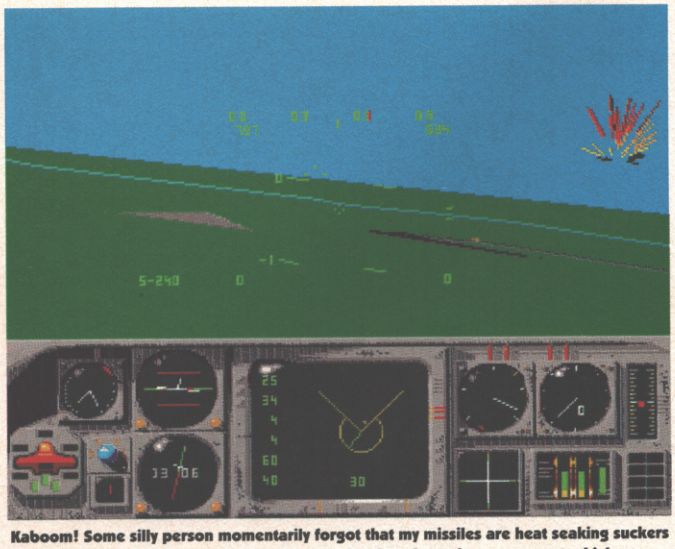
1. It looks almost the same as the MiG-29 from the outside, because the external design is still considered to be perfect.

2. The MiG-29 can compete head on with the best of the Western fighter alternatives. However, they're reputedly extremely difficult to handle, and poorly trained pilots often end up getting killed.

3. The MiG-29 was originally designed nearly twenty years ago, after earlier MiG's had taken a bit of a pounding in Vietnam. The Super Fulcrum should be in proper service within two or three years.

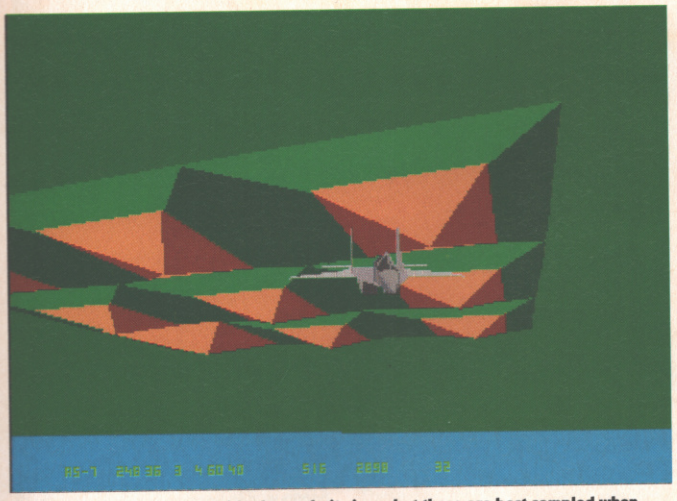
4. The pilot of a Fulcrum can aim missiles by simply moving his head – there's a computer in his helmet (Blimey!).

5. It has a flight ceiling of 56,000 feet and a maximum speed in excess of Mach 2.4 (ie pretty blooming fast).

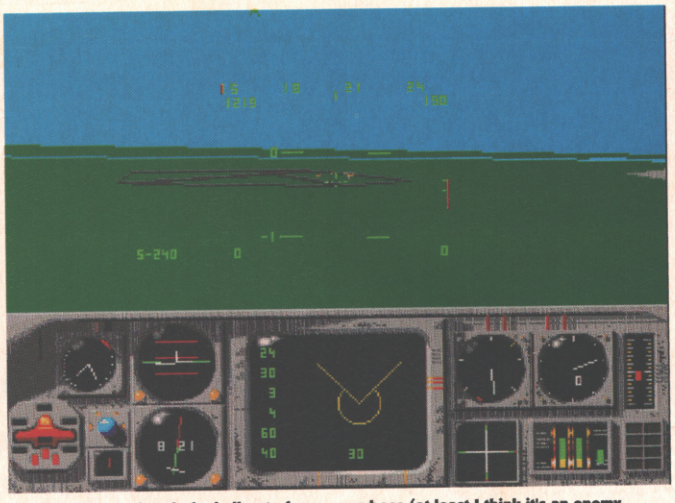


Kaboom! Some silly person momentarily forgot that my missiles are heat seaking suckers that DON'T miss. Even so, it's generally pretty hard to shoot down an enemy which means there's a great thrill to be had when one finally gets wasted.

updated their well-known *MiG-29* sim. But what real difference does an 'M' make?



There are plenty of tasty outside-the-cockpit views, but these are best sampled when there's actually some decent background detail to have a good gawp at.



Coming in low to bomb the hell out of an enemy base (at least I think it's an enemy base). Either way, there wasn't much left of it one minute after this shot was taken.

assume that it's really brilliant (which I'm sure it is), but that, like me, not many of you are going to take advantage of it all that often.

LEARNING TO WING IT, MIG STYLE

There's a bit of a problem with reviewing flight sims at the moment – sooner or later you've got to draw the comparison with MicroProse's glorious *F-15 Strike Eagle II*, and not too many games come out of it looking any rosier than when they went in. Now it's *MiG-29M*'s turn and, well, let's be frank, I don't like it anywhere near as much as the MicroProse game. It's not as shoot-'em-uppy, it's nowhere near as pretty and you don't get as great a sense of being in control or (most importantly) of it being a friendly game to get into. For an average person into having fun with a flight sim I'd recommend the (five pounds cheaper!) *Strike Eagle* every time, while for the beginner I'd say hey, why not go for the ancient (but still jolly good) *F/A18 Interceptor* at ten quid instead?

However, if you're either of these sorts of people, *MiG 29M* isn't really aimed at you anyway. This is for the plane buffs and technology freaks out there instead, and it has to be said that in technical accuracy it impresses at every turn. *Super Fulcrum* is a right handful at first, and just staying in the air is about the most you'll manage to do on your first few flights, but practice long and hard and you'll slowly find yourself getting drawn into it. You'll have to put up with the fact that you're unlikely to be battling it out with baddies two minutes after leaving the runway (as you might be used to) or that all the navigation stuff has to be taken into account even if you detest that part of flight games, but – hey! – that's what flying a real plane is like, I guess.

"It makes a pretty sexy subject for a flight sim"

Unfortunately though, one old *MiG 29* problem remains. The smooth and fast way the plane handles is still at the expense of the look of the thing – while it's been improved here, ground detail is still well short of what we've come to expect. Yes, you'll come across individual targets, (obstacles like mountain ranges, navigational landmarks like rivers) but incidental detail simply does not exist. Even while you're flying at a reasonably low level you get the feeling that you're over an empty green wasteland; just the sort of thing programmers were striving to avoid five years ago. In fact, when you consider how entertainment driven Domark usually are, it's a very odd sort of product for them to be publishing at all.

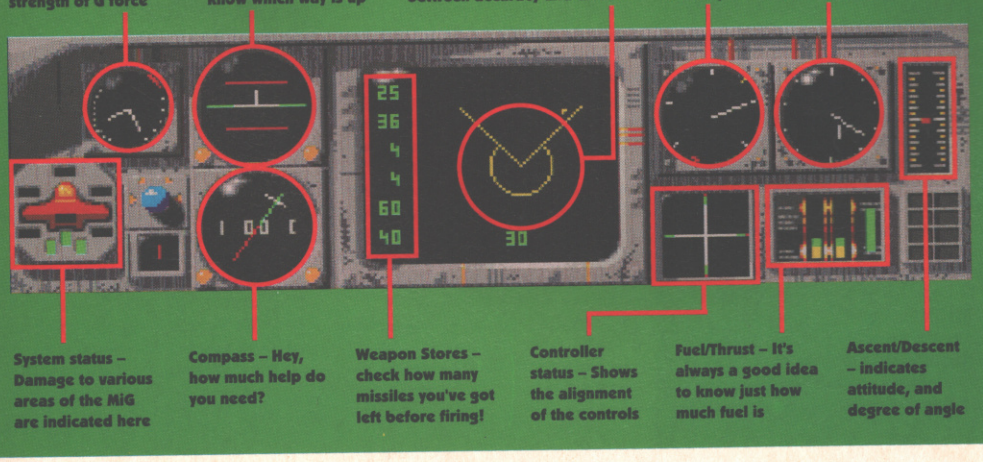
A few traditional shoot-'em-uppy flight sim things I miss then: a) You can't tweak the enemy's level of competence. b) You can't give yourself unlimited ammunition and weapons. (Mind you, the standard weapons on offer do make up a fantastic set of fireworks). c) You can't access the map unless you're on the ground. (This may be frightfully 'like the real thing', but it can make life pretty bloomin' irritating when you're just trying to have a little bit of fun).

However, quibbling about this stuff might be out of order – I do get the feeling that this game isn't really aimed at the likes of me at all. For the technically minded flight simer this – even at £40! – could prove a very good buy. The trouble is, it isn't a game that's been designed to be fun per se, and while many people will love it I suspect that some, attracted by the subject rather than the software, will be in for a rather confusing time.

● *COLIN CAMPBELL*

DIAL M FOR MIG

The initial reaction to any flight sim is 'What do all those dials and readouts mean?' Well read below and you'll be ready for anything.



UPPERS There's plenty to separate this from its predecessor. The aircraft, the enemies, and the missions are more sophisticated and challenging (quite how they originally thought it might work as a missions disk for the first *MiG* I don't know). A real delight for tech heads.

DOWNERS That accuracy seems to have been achieved at the expense of good old fashioned fun and prettiness. The landscape has been improved, but it's still a way short of competitors. Also, learning to fly is an arduous and sometimes pretty unrewarding experience.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you enjoyed the original *MiG-29* there's certainly enough here to make the sequel a worthwhile purchase. *MiG-29* is hard to fault as a genuine flight sim, but there's not really much here for mainstream gamers.

80 PERCENT

OUTRUN EUROPA

US Gold make their third bid at producing the definitive *OutRun* game, this time forsaking the wide open plains of America for the more extravagance of Europe.

Game: OutRun Europa
Publisher: US Gold
Price: £24.95
Author: Stuart Gregg (code), Saul Marchese (graphics) and Matt Furniss (music) at Probe
Release: Out now

Of course, the title of *OutRun Europa* gives the game away a bit. This is exactly what it sounds like – *OutRun* set in Europe, a mad illegal dash through the home counties and London, across the Channel, and then through France, Italy and so on in various vehicles (ranging from motorbike to Ferrarri). It's even more unrealistic than the basic high speed race format of the real *OutRun* (you have to ignore the realities of geographical distance for a start) but what it clearly has over the original game is a) that there're a greater number of vehicles to drive and b) that there are such spectacular backgrounds – not only are they more complicated and involved than most (perhaps any?) of the type, they're generally evocative of the places they're meant to represent.

OutRun Europa, though? You've been racking your brains for the last paragraph, I can tell. It's not exactly the most common coin-op around, is it? In fact, you probably don't remember seeing one at all, do you? That is, of course, because it doesn't actually exist, which provides the perfect cue, before we go any further, for three things you really should know about the game:

"This sort of thing is the Baywatch of computer games"

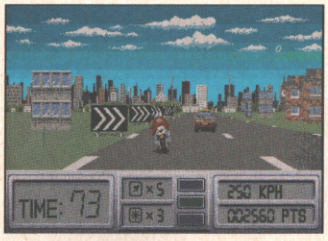
No 1) It might sound like it's a coin-op conversion, but it's not. In fact this 'third' *OutRun* game is an original creation of well known arcade converters Probe, originally mooted (and, indeed, developed) two years ago, but totally reworked for this eventual release. The thinking behind it is much the same as that behind the recent *Gauntlet III*, another game which never actually appeared as a coin-op.

No 2) It's very much a traditional-style driving game. That means bright, very Amiga-looking graphics, a stage system where you've got to make it through a level in 85 seconds or less to continue, hopelessly unrealistic speeds and so on. Old fashioned in the face of the likes of *Formula One Grand Prix* and *Indy 500* then, but not necessarily crap – I remember the original *OutRun* conversion (despite its iffy quality) being played for months where I used to work, and that's simply because the formula is so accessible and, well, fun.

This sort of thing is the Baywatch or Beverley Hills 90210 of computer games – fun and jolly and bright and rather crap, but fun nonetheless.

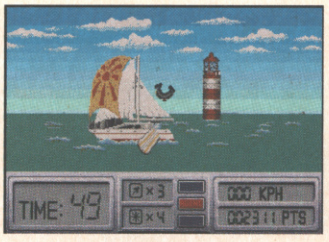
No 3) It's impressively quick. I'll get onto that in a moment, but in many ways it's one of the most important elements of a driving game, and whatever you might think about *OutRun Europa*, you couldn't call this game a slouch.

Yes, yes, yes, you're no doubt saying, but is it any good? Well, by the standards of previous *OutRun* games, yes it is. On reloading the Amiga conversion of



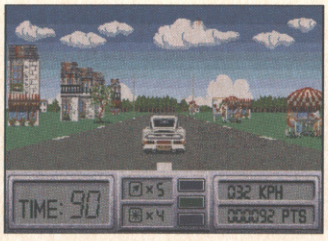
Level One – England

Perhaps the most visually impressive of all the levels, the English section puts you on a fast motorbike in a race towards the docks at Dover. Starting out somewhere just north of London, you head towards the capital for a bit (Big Ben, St Pauls and so on clearly visible) then out into the home counties (Surrey presumably) which are made up of rolling hills, patchwork effect fields and the like. There's no denying it – this level does actually look like Britain, and the details like correct looking road signs (though shouldn't they be green, not blue?) add much to the effect. London taxis, orange Fords and Sierra police cars provide most of the moving obstacles.



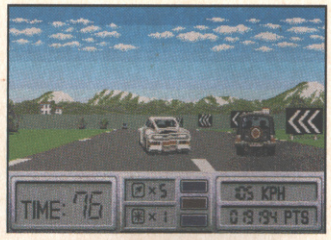
Level Two – The English Channel

The programmers have obviously seen the Channel alright – it's a horrible murky grey/green colour capped with the odd little white horses, and as such is spot on. I would question whether they've ever taken a ferry across it though – according to *OutRun Europa* the busiest sea lane in the world is packed chock-full with lighthouses and rocks of all descriptions (not how I remember it) and buzzing with trawlers, yachts and the like, amongst which your tiny jet-ski has to weave like crazy to have any chance of getting anywhere at all. Add the silly *Fire And Forget*-style shoot-'em-up element and it's tricky believing in this level at all.



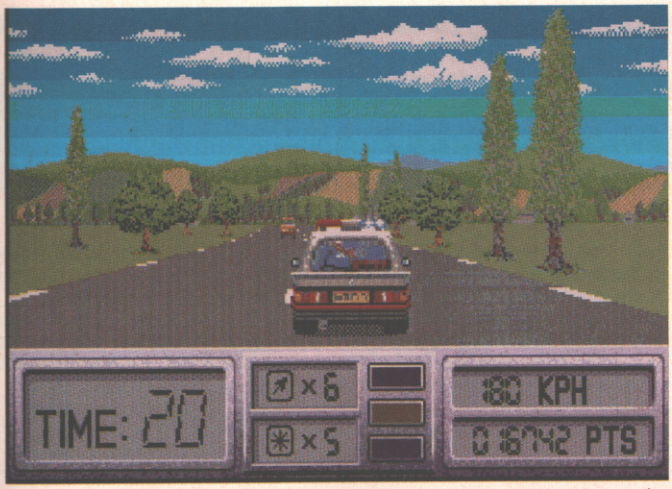
Level Three – France

France doesn't manufacture any suitably fast cars for his bit, so you find yourself behind the wheel of a German Porsche 959 (about three times as snazzy as your normal Porsche) instead on a chase through the French countryside. You can tell it's France because of all the road-side pavement cafes and Renault 5s you keep overtaking – generally the countryside is a lot flatter and emptier than in England, pretty much as you'd expect it to be. Police cars are some sort of medium-sized Peugeots (or similar) while your rival agent crops up this time in a black Renault 5 Turbo.



Level Four – Spain

Erm, this bit's just the same as France really, only you can see mountains in the background (the Pyrenees presumably). Cars are much more nondescript – a makeless police car, some Peugeot 205s and a jeep of some sort for the agent – and greenery is suitably sparse. Scenery-wise there's not much else to say really – it's all a bit too similar to France really for there to be anything else to comment on. (The massive opportunity to put lots of British holiday-makers in their Union Jack sorts and donkeys with straw hats on has gone sadly missed).



Hey, where did I go? The way that your view of yourself can be obscured by other cars is neat and clever, if a bit confusing at times. (I'm in front of that police car, by the way).

the first game I was amazed at how poor it was. Funny, flattened looking graphics, little sense of speed and an ultra-wide roadway for much of the game (making crashing all but impossible) make it a very disappointing experience – *OutRun Europa* has none of these faults. *Turbo OutRun* was a lot better – it looked really good and succeeded in being pretty playable, but *OutRun Europa* quite clearly has it over that one too. By the standards of the Christmas of '87-'88 then, when the first *OutRun* came out, this is quite clearly a very good game indeed.

By the standards of 1991 though it does come across as sort of lacking.

These days for this sort of price you can pick up Geoff Crammond's new *Formula One Grand Prix* or EA's *Indy 500*, a couple of super-fast 3D driving games that make *Europa* look straight out of the stone age. Or you can get Gremlin's *Lotus II*, with its more controllable car and neat visual effects. The only thing *Europa* really has over these other games is the tourist novelty of all those European settings, and it has to be said that once you've enjoyed the pleasingly English feel of the first stage, Europa starts to disappoint in increasing amounts. Here, then, are some of the things that are wrong with it:

"By the standards of 1991 it comes across as lacking"

a) Both boat levels make up for the lack of there being any clearly defined roadway by simply throwing obstacles at you and adding a shoot-'em-up element, so you get the ridiculous image of the English Channel or Mediterranean simply jam-packed with next-to-unavoidable boats, rocks and lighthouses.

b) The graphics guy has obviously had more problems visualising the rest of Europe than he did the UK. France and Spain are almost identical, Italy looks to be one big desert, and only Germany manages a non-cliché driving game look, mainly by its use of sombre dark greens.

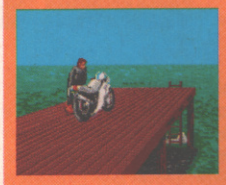
c) Absolutely no attempt is made to give you any interesting visual effects – exactly the sort of thing that gives a driving game variety and makes it a real challenge. You'd think somewhere in Europe there might be snow, or rain, or something, but no.

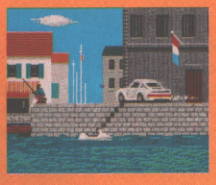
d) The possibilities of having different types of driving for each geographical area are ignored too. Switzerland or the Pyrenees would have made for excellent tight mountain road sequences (in the style the spectacular recent coin-op, *Rad Mobile*), miles of European coastline lend themselves to a chase along a winding coastal road, oodles of large European cities lend themselves to a stop-start sort of city driving, but none are taken advantage of. What's here is just boringly average.

e) The tagged on secret agent plot, with a rival driver in a variety of black cars keeping pace with you (annoyingly, he goes exactly as fast as you, making his appearance a regular pain in the ass) is no substitute for the good time feel of cruising in your supercar with your best girl by your side. All the spy sub-plot does is push the game in the direction of *Chase HQ* without giving you another car to chase.

DAY TRIPPER, ONE WAY TICKET

At Dover (1) you get off your bike, remove your bike leathers to reveal a wetsuit (!), hop on your jetski, get in this Porsche (2) in France, drive to Spain, get in a speedboat (3) and so it goes...

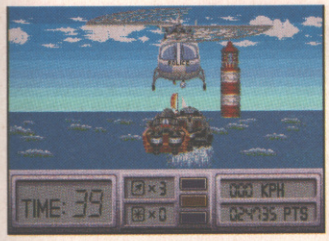




IT'S SPINNING IN THE LANE

So where does that leave us? Well, while this is in my mind without doubt the best of the *OutRun* games, it does struggle to justify a £25 price mark. Games inarguably far superior to this are selling at the same price, while all its most obvious rivals (*OutRun*, *Buggy Boy*, *Super Hang On*) come in at around the eight quid mark. Even if you ignore the awkwardness of the controls – for much of the time this game just doesn't *feel* right, though you'd probably have to play it yourself to know exactly what I mean – and the laziness of the design, you'd still be hard pushed to point out areas where it does anything significantly better than the best of these older games.

Despite the graphical good points *OutRun Europa* comes across as a game out of time – next to modern rivals, it seems thin, uncontrollable, cartoony and just a little childish. ● *MATT BIELBY*



Level Five – The Mediterranean

Very similar to the English Channel (packed with lighthouses, yachts and so on) if rather bluer colour-wise, the Med puts you in a yellow speedboat for a rather unrealistic dash from Spain all the way across to Italy! Similar yachts, coastguard boats and bomb-dropping helicopters (!) to the Channel level complicate matters, while the enemy agent in an annoying black speedboat keeps easy pace with you and gets to be a bit of pain. No topless sunbathers to be seen (boo!) which spoils it a bit, and generally it's just as impossible to play as the earlier water section.

Level Six – Italy

Into an ultra-rare Ferrarri F40 for a race north. Italy tends to look more like Arizona than anything (it's all yellow desert – only the cactuses are missing) but the Lancia (?) police cars, VW Beetles, and agent's black Lotus Esprit you encounter liven things up a bit. It's a fair bet the programmers skipped a few geography lessons though...

Level Seven – Germany

...because you manage to crash straight through from desert Italy into a very green, lush and Bavarian looking Germany – whatever happened to Austria, I wonder? (Maybe your Ferrari goes so fast that you whiz right through it without even noticing. Or something). This section is packed with red VW Golf's, assorted Fords (the office can't agree on whether they're Capris or Escorts) and a typically annoying black Mercedes for our main bad guy. Slightly bizarre looking mountains in the background, but the lush autobahn look of the section is fairly effective for all that. This is one where the road suddenly forks quite a lot – always an effective ploy.

UPPERS An intriguing concept – *OutRun* set in Europe! – excellent high speed, and some quite impressive visuals (most notably in the very English-looking first level).

DOWNERS Skittish controls and narrow roads make it harder than necessary, the potential of the European setting is never exploited to the full, and the number of comparable games now on budget make it kind of redundant.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The best *OutRun* perhaps, but very ordinary and unambitious when compared to modern racing game rivals, *Lotus II* for one.

74 PERCENT

Game: The Blues Brothers
Publisher: Titus
Price: £25.99
Authors: Vincent Berthelot, Jean Michel Masson, Olivier Calladout
Release: Out now

They hate the Illinois Nazis, they wear shades, and they believe hat

THE BLUES

I'm on a mission from God, too... French publishers Titus don't have the most impressive record ever, that's for sure. *Crazy Cars*, *Fire And Forget*, *Dick Tracy* and, um, lots of other really memorable titles have gained them something of a joke reputation among quality software fans. When they announced the acquisition of the Blues Brothers licence, then, game lovers divided into two distinct camps – those who hated The Blues Brothers and didn't care a hoot who got the rights, and those who loved them and were absolutely horrified at the prospect of Titus getting their grubby hands anywhere near their heroes. Me, I can take Jake and Elwood or leave them, which makes me ideal for an objective review of this game. Probably.

PLOT? WHO THE HELL NEEDS IT?

The Blues Brothers – The Game owes almost nothing in storyline to the legendary film, but the plot will still sound strangely familiar to movie devotees. Jake and Elwood have a gig to play, but the local sheriff, mindful of the repercussions of the boys' last show (the one in the film), has had their equipment stolen and hidden all over town by gangs of homicidal thugs. Said gentlemen will also stop at nothing to postpone the Brothers' show by less than subtle means, (ie putting Jake or Elwood in hospital for the duration), which leaves our heroes faced with the proverbial mountain to climb. They have to run, jump and crawl their way through six levels retrieving their vital pieces of kit, while simultaneously avoiding the sheriff's crazed hordes and... well, that's about it, as it happens.The basic concept of the game is a straightforward console-esque cartoony platforms-and-ladders escapade, of the type frequently attempted without much success by Ocean with their movie licence games, and particularly reminiscent of the new *Hudson Hawk* effort (see review elsewhere in this issue). Complicated strategy isn't the name of the game here, it's 'Dash About Madly And Hope For The Best'.

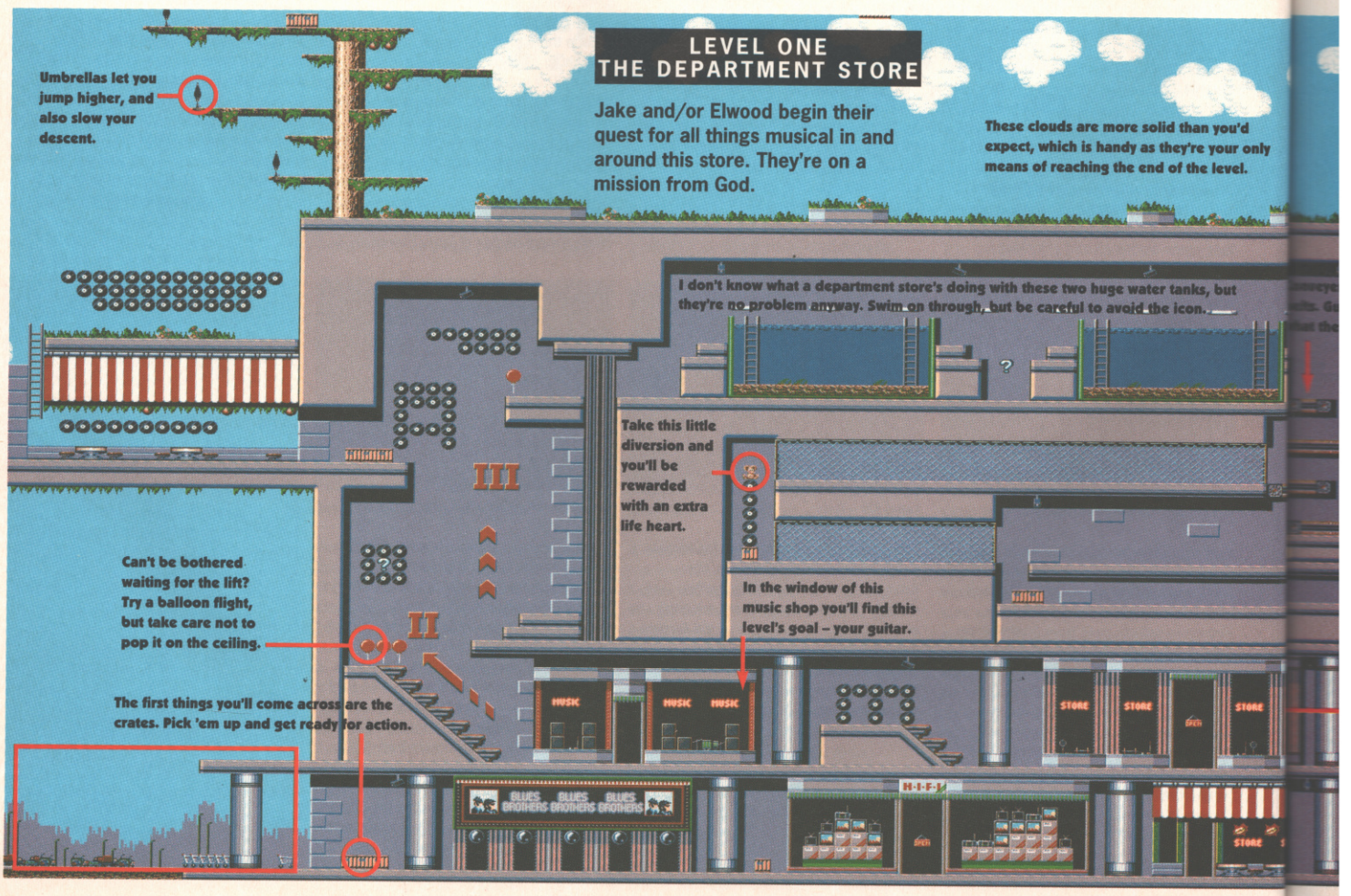
Okay, so enough detail, it's about time we got down to whether, against all expectations, Titus have succeeded where so many have failed before them and turned a popular film into a great game. There's a first time for everything, I suppose...

THIS COULD BE THE FIRST TIME

...and this is it! *The Blues Brothers* is, without a shadow of a doubt, the finest character licence game ever seen on the Amiga. Now that might seem like rather a lofty claim, but it's true and that's all there is to it. It's not all that big, it's not especially hard, it's not very clever and it's certainly not even slightly grown-up, but what this game is is the most fun I've had all month. There's nothing particularly original in the design, but it's so well put together and full of character that it's a total joy to play.

Not that you'd have thought that if you'd wandered into the office while I was playing it for this review, as I screamed and swore and hit things violently in frustration, but believe me, I was having fun. None of the levels in the game are dramatically large, especially given the frantic pace the whole thing's played at, but they're just long (and hard) enough that you never quite manage to get to the end of them as easily as you think you should do. So you slam the joystick down in anger, kick yourself for your carelessness, say 'Right, I'll have you this time, you horrible little game' (or words to that effect), and pick the stick up again and dive right back in. And get killed again (of course). Yes, what I'm trying rather long-windedly to say here is that this game's addictive as hell, and if you don't believe me, ask our security guard.

Addiction is far from all *The Blues*



ieve hat everybody needs somebody. And now their getting soulful on the Amiga...

ES BROTHERS

Brothers has got going for it, though. The graphics are nothing less than lovely, both in look and movement. Jake and Elwood have different characters, and as they career incompetently across the bright, pin-sharp cartoon backdrops the effect is

'The finest character licence game ever seen on the Amiga'

similar to watching a particularly good Marx Brothers film (except in colour). The animation suits the almost-slapstick feel perfectly, and if you don't laugh when you see Jake and Elwood inadvertently collect a 'dance bonus' token and bop ludicrously on the spot for five seconds then you're either dead or you ought to be. Sound is excellent too, with one of several top tunes from the movie soundtrack playing throughout each level on top of some ordinary but sweet effects. (You can switch either or both off at any time if their bouncy cheerfulness begins to annoy you on your nineteenth attempt at level three, luckily).

The clincher, though, is the playability. Everything feels just right, all the controls are simple and instinctive, and there's just a tiny bit of inertia on the boys' movement for that complete *Super Mario Brothers*-type experience. When you mess up in this game, you've got nothing to blame but your own lack of co-ordination.

THE SUPERFLIES IN THE OINTMENT

Traditionally though, there are a few bugbears. In two-player mode, the scrolling only follows one of the characters, so in two player mode the other player can easily disappear off-screen and get hopelessly lost. It's difficult to see how it could have worked any other way without losing the pace of the action, but it's a shame all the same. Also, with only three lives (three 'energy hearts' per life) and only one restart point per level (about half-way through, logically enough), some players may find it all just a little too frustrating.

Then again, it's nowhere near as annoying as, say, *Rick Dangerous*, and that sold millions so it shouldn't be too big a problem. At least in *The Blues Brothers* you always see what's going to kill you before you die.

In any case, the relative smallness of the levels means that you've never got too much ground to cover to regain your position. Whatever, these are embarrassingly picky points, and you really shouldn't let them stop you from buying this game. If you've ever liked fun arcade platform games (ie if you thought *Magic Pockets* was a load of tedious old crap, as anyone with an ounce of taste did), you'll love *The Blues Brothers* to death. ● *STUART CAMPBELL*

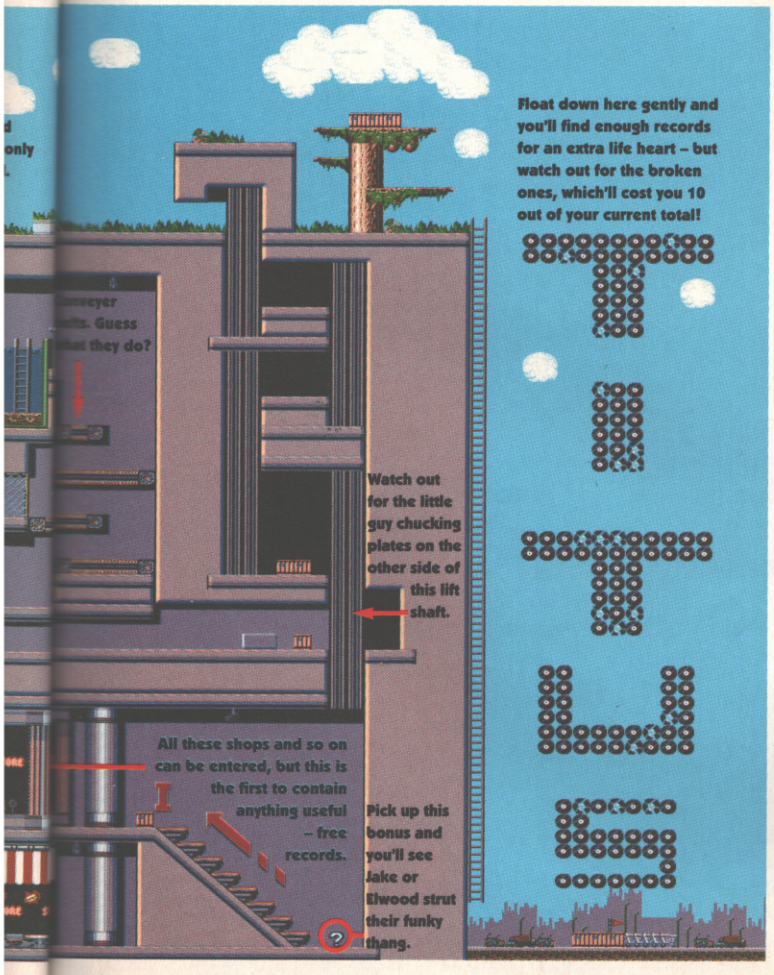
UPPERS So playable it's frightening, so gorgeous and funny you won't be able to wipe the smile from your face all the way to the end.

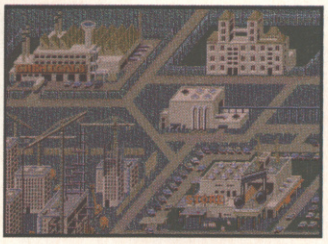
DOWNERS Two-player mode doesn't really work, and some people (not me, though) might find the lack of restart points irritating.

THE BOTTOM LINE

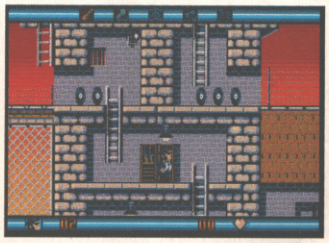
Sparkling piece of console-style action that's excellent in everything it does. Don't let the Titus name put you off, they've finally come good. Fun fun fun.

87 PERCENT

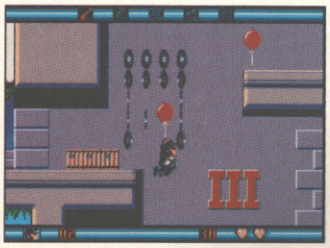




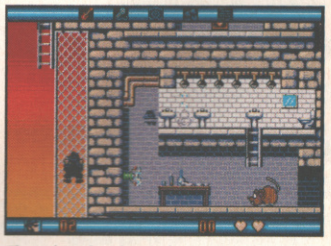
The map screen appears between levels and shows you the five main stages of the game, crossing them out as you do them.



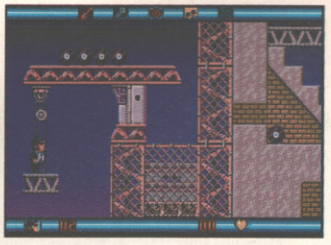
Level three takes place in the prison. Take a look for hidden records but watch out – some of those crims are mean mothers.



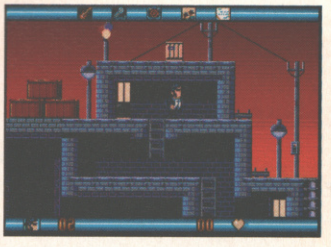
You wouldn't think that rather weedy-looking balloon would support porky old Jake, but that's physics for you.



The prison level even includes a set of slippy showers – watch out for Mr. Big!



The fifth level is set on that perennial game scene, the building site.



The short level six is more of an end sequence than a proper level, but you can still blow it, so be careful.

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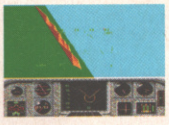

Mig-29
Domark's demo of the Top Russian jet sim – a test of reaction, skill and guts

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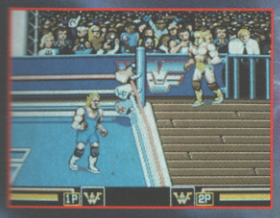

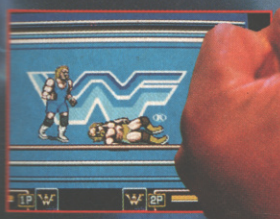

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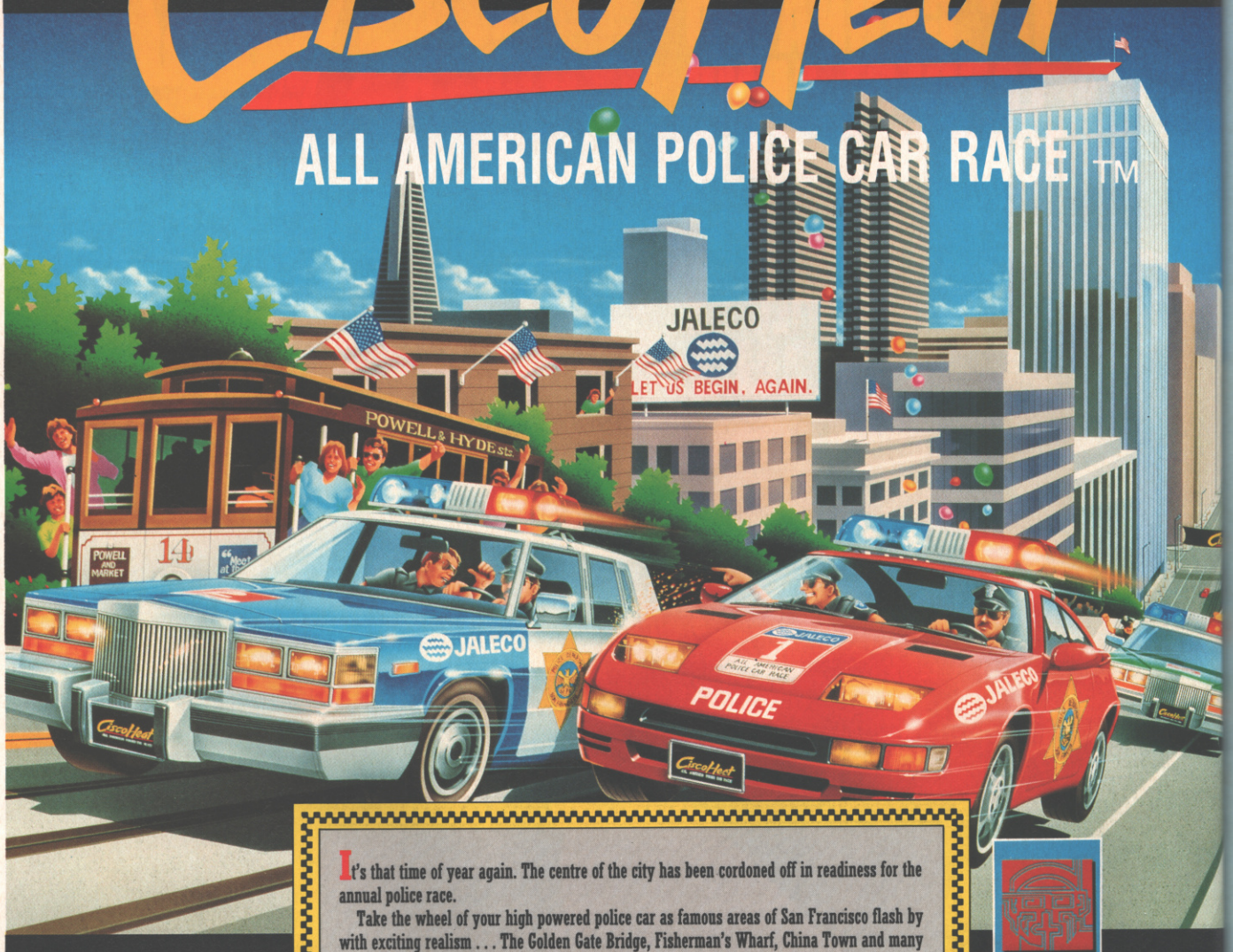

It's that time of year again. The centre of the city has been cordoned off in readiness for the annual police race.

Take the wheel of your high powered police car as famous areas of San Francisco flash by with exciting realism . . . The Golden Gate Bridge, Fisherman's Wharf, China Town and many more; as you head for the finishing line at Treasure Island.

With 5 levels to tackle, only the top class drivers can make it - **so hit the gas pedal and race for glory.**

image WORKS

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ACTION REPLAY POKES BONANZA

Yikes! We stirred up a real hornet's nest and no mistake when we ran a few pokes for the Action Replay cartridge a couple of months back. Letters flowed in with more tips and pokes, and in response to many requests we've decided to make it a regular spot (always assuming that enough people send the stuff in, of course). So this month, we're starting the ball rolling with a real bumper bundle. Remember, these pokes are activated by pressing the red button while the game is running, typing 'M' followed by the codes given (ie for *Xenon 2* type 'M000CCB'), and altering the first number (and ONLY the first number) in the row which will then appear, to change the number of lives, amount of time, or whatever. (Changing the value to 00 will quite often provide infinite lives, so give that a try). Don't change any of the other values (unless instructed to do so) or you may crash the game. Happy poking!

Game	Address	Function altered
The Simpsons	006021	lives
Switchblade 2	00261F	lives
Xenon 2	000CCB	lives
The Spy Who Loved Me	024DB5	lives
Gods	000255	lives
Technocop	C18BE1	lives
9 Lives	005807	lives
Brat	0080B7	lives
Ghosts'n'Goblins	C18842	lives
Z-Out	008328	lives
Operation Wolf	036F57	weapons
Operation Thunderbolt	02102B	weapons
Super Wonder Boy	0009F9	credits
Escape From The Planet Of The Robot Monsters	043613	credits
P.P. Hammer	01058F	lives (to stop the clock, change the 02 on the address line to 12)
Rainbow Islands	00E337	lives
Rainbow Islands	0011C7	credits
Theme Park Mystery	03969B	lives
Chuck Rock	00697F	lives
E-Motion	00410D	lives
License To Kill	01081F	lives
Army Moves	0053B6	lives
Thundercats	026D47	lives
Kid Gloves	014C3B	lives
Battle Squadron	004DDA	player 1 lives
Battle Squadron	004EE4	player 2 lives
Battle Squadron	004ED5	player 1 nova missiles
Battle Squadron	004EEF	player 2 nova missiles
St. Dragon	01160B	lives
Robocop 2	001695	lives
Dragon Breed	02A337	lives
Blood Money	008C29	lives
Flood	017E77	lives
Silkworm	000235	lives
Turrican II	00015C	lives (first address 10s
	00015D	second address units)
Turrican II	007871	power lines
Turrican	007AB1	
	007AB0	lives (see *Turrican II*)
Wizball	05907D	lives
Action Fighter	01DE84	lives
Backlash	00A0C0	lives
Twinworld	00E337	lives
Baal	00FA20	lives
James Pond	0001B1	lives
Mystical	01F1A7	lives

(Thanks to Colin Hannah, Peter Davison, David Hayward, Julio Riesco, Graham Smith – anyone else with some good muliface pokes?)

COMPLETE control

Lots of little bits and pieces this month as we gear up for the big Gary Penn tips take-over next issue – not only is there a bonanza selection of Action Replay cartridge pokes (opposite), there are big things on *Mega lo Mania, Populous, The Power* and more...

TANGRAM
(Thalion)

You want to play *Tangram* some more? You sick, sick person. Still, it's not our place to make moral judgements on what you do in the privacy of your own home, so here're a few passwords for some later levels.

10 - 07274	50 - 27277
20 - 14278	60 - 02675
30 - 81093	70 - 47274
40 - 47672	80 - 91281

FULL CONTACT
(Team 17)

You have to wonder about people who cheat in one-on-one beat-'em-ups, don't you? Anyway, if you're desperate enough, type 'QAZWXEDCRFVTGBYHNUJM' while playing. At some point during this, your opponent will keel over and die. (NB Make sure you don't press 'S').

STORMBALL
(Millennium)

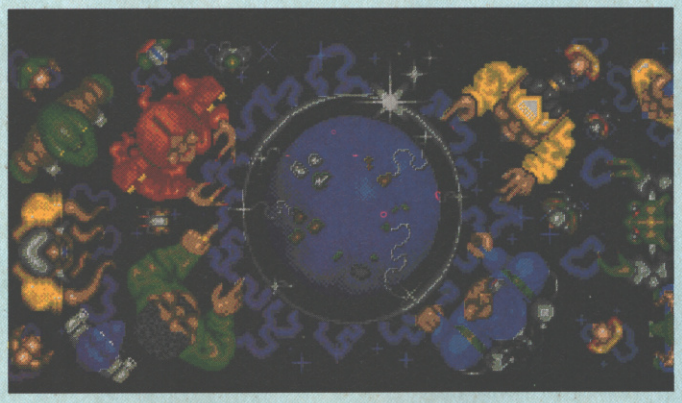
Here's an easy one – during play, type 'LET ME WIN'. Guess what happens.

NAVY SEALS
(Ocean)

Type PSBOYS on the high score table, press 'Esc' to skip levels. (Funny, we never figured the super-hard Navy SEALs as Pet Shop Boys fans).

MEGA LO

This stunning 90 percent-rated game from Issue Four is still giving us problems in the office, but cuddly old Image Works were kind enough to send us these staggeringly helpful tips so we thought it was only fair to share them with you, our beloved readers. Take it away, Image Works...



***Mega lo Mania*: the making of a feuding world...**

1. Pick the starting sector with the best elements for the inventions you wish to make this time around.
2. Learn from experience which elements are best for which designs.
3. If you design something and the designer says 'ergonomically terrific', note down the sector it was in then look under the blueprints for the design. You will see a hand showing an OK symbol to show that the design is, indeed, 'Ergonomically Terrific'. Note down the components of the design – this is one of the perfect ways to design this object and reduces design time by half. If you see another sector later in the game with the same elements available then you know that this design can be knocked out in next to no time.
4. Sectors with many gatherable elements are often the best to produce weapons fast for a quick 'Surprise Attack!'
5. Sectors with mostly gatherables are not as desirable if the game has gone on to the later stages, especially in Epoch Three. It is advisable to find a sector with some more sophisticated elements.
6. Eventually you should be able to learn the best seams to mine and the ones to leave alone in order to achieve the chance to design the object of your desire.
7. Whenever a new seam is mined it is always best to check the design menu first in case a new design is available.
8. If a seam or element is totally used up thereby making a design impossible to produce any more, bin the design on the blueprints menu and there is a chance you may be able to redesign it with the elements you have left.
9. If you want, say, an army weapon and you have only shields and building weapons these will sometimes shift you up a tech level, which will in turn make another element available, which could well lead to the design you require...
10. In order to produce designs that are quick to either make immediately or manufacture, try making as much as possible before starting any mining as inventions made from gatherables save valuable time and manpower.
11. Always wait until clocks have ticked down to zero before changing the factory to produce a new object, and likewise think twice when designing before you abort a design halfway through – it is wasting time.
12. Knowledge of different elements in different sectors can help you read what your computer opponents are likely to arm themselves with.
13. Try to keep your men balanced between tasks to maximise efficiency – only throw men all into one thing if you are in an emergency.
14. If time is on your side try to leave as many men as possible to reproduce in the tower. Men are your currency, bank wisely.
15. If you are under fire but with time on your side, designing shields from just gatherables can be a lifesaver.
16. Play sensibly, do not send unarmed men to attack buildings as they will have no effect. Only do this by sending one or two lambs to the slaughter as a tester to see what sort of armies they have hidden away.
17. Use the map to see what your enemies are up to.
18. Remember a building weapon man is twice as strong as an armed man on the ground from the same area.
19. If next to an opponent at the start of a game try to ally with him immediately to stop him attacking you.
20. If your backs are against the wall and you are about to die, try allying with your aggressor. You have nothing left to lose.
21. Play an island with loads of men to suss it all out and then play it again with fewer and fewer men, see how low you can go. Remember...

USE AS FEW MEN AS POSSIBLE!

THE TEAMS

Scarlet – Red
Usually a good bet for a quick alliance but prone to infidelity. Tends to attack frequently and with unpredictable armies and can be quite easily tempted into a battle in order to divert her men away from duties at home.
Try to avoid picking a starting sector next to her or she could cause trouble. Likes designing army weapons.

Oberon - Yellow
Likes to offer himself in alliance more than most – veers towards the less reliable side of remaining faithful. Attacks erratically – a useful ally in battle, but prone to retaliation. Likes to design any sort of weapon.

Caesar – Green
Not so easy to persuade to ally, but worthwhile and fairly reliable.
Seems to have the best balance between attack and defence. Likes building weapons best as he knows designs. Try to limit his territory.

Madcap – Blue
Tricky to persuade, but faithful as the day is long in alliances. Not one to suggest 'shacking up' very often.
A careful tactician he rarely makes a false move. Hit him early to put him off balance. Likes designing building shields. Tends to attack seldom but overpoweringly.

DESIGNS THAT THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS ARE GOOD FOR:

ROCKS, WOOD, AND BONES
Rock Weapon
Catapult
Spear
Bow And Arrow
Crossbow

SLATE, MOONLITE, PLANETARIUM
Pike
Longbow
Giant Catapult
Stick Weapon
Spear
Musket

TARGET MEN TO COMPLETE EACH ISLAND

TARGET MEN TO COMPLETE EACH ISLAND
Aloha - 5
Bazooka - 10
Cilla - 10
Dracula - 15
Etcetera - 15
Formica - 20
Gazza - 20
Hernia - 20
Ibiza - 15

ALOHA

Rock ●● ✱		
Slate ✱		
Solarium ▲		
Herbirite –		
Wood ✱		
Parasite –		
Bethlium ▲		
Moonslite ▲		

BAZOOKA

Bones ✱	Rocks ✱	
Planetarium ▲	Bones ✱	
Herbirlite –	Planetarium ▲	
Valium –	Yeridium –	
Slate ●●✱	Wood ✱	
Bethlium ▲	Moonlite ▲	
Herbirte –	Araldite –	
Parsite –		

CILLA

Bones ✱	Moonlite ▲	
Solarium ▲	Slate ✱	
Valium –	Parasite –	
Aquarium –		
Rocks ✱	Wood ✱	Slate ●●
Aramlite –	Planetarain ▲	Bethlium ▲
Yeridium –	Solarium ▲	Araldite –
	Parasite –	Yeriduim –
	Wood ✱	
	Solarium ▲	
	Aquarium –	

DRACULA

Bones ✱	Wood ✱	Bones ✱
Planetarium ▲	Solarium ▲	Solarium ▲
Herbirite –	Herbirite –	Araldite –
	Planeterium –	
Moonlite ▲	Rocks ●●✱	
Bethlium ▲	Slates ✱	
Valium –	Araldite –	
Aquarium –		

FORMICA

Moonlite ▲	Rocks ●●✱
Planetarium ▲	
Slate ✱	
Paladium –	Moonlite ▲
	Onion –
	Wood✱
	Bones✱

ETCETRA

Wood ✱	Planetarium ▲	Rocks ✱
Bones ✱	Solarium ▲	Moonlite ▲
Moonlite ▲	Araldite –	Araldite –
Aquarium –		Aquarium –
	Moonlite ▲	
	Bethlium ▲	
	Parasite –	
	Slates ●●✱	Bones ✱
	Planetarium ▲	Moonlite ▲
	Onion –	Yeridium –
		Valium –
	Moonlite ▲	
	Planetarium ▲	
	Solarium ▲	
	Araldite –	

ISLAND KEY

✱ - Gatherables
▲ - Open Cast Mine
– - Pit Mine
●● - Best Startling Sector

MANIA

BETHLIUM, SOLARIUM, ARALDITE
Catapult
Pike
Longbow
Cannon
Boiling Oil
Crossbow

HERBIRITE, YERIDIUM
Longbow
Giant Catapult

VALIUM, PARASITE
Bow And Arrow
Boiling Oil
Musket

AQUARIUM, PALADIUM
Giant Catapult

Herbirite, Yeridium - 3,4
Valium, Parasite - 4
Aquarium, Paladium - none

EPOCH TWO
Rocks, Wood, Bones - 1,3,4
Slate, Moonlite, Planetarium - 2
Bethlium, Solarium, Araldite - 1
Herbirite, Yeridium - 2,3
Valium, Parasite - 3
Aquarium, Paladium - 4

EPOCH THREE
Rocks, Wood, Bones - 2,3,4
Slate, Moonlite, Planetarium - 1
Bethlium, Solarium, Araldite - 4
Herbirite, Yeridium - 1,2
Valium, Parasite - 2
Aquarium, Paladium - 3,4

SHIELD DESIGN
EPOCH ONE
Rocks, Wood, Bones - Shield 1,2,4
Slate, Moonlite, Planetarium - 1,3
Bethlium, Solarium, Araldite - 2

NB All elements can be used in ALL designs with the exception of rock and stick weapons, but the listed weapons are more likely to be designed from these elements.

GAZZA

Wood ✱	Aradite –
Moonlite ▲	Aquarium –
Bethlium ▲	Tedium –
Aquarium –	
States ●●✱	Moonlight ▲
Herbrite –	Planetarium ▲
Moonlite ▲	Onion –
Paladium –	
	Rocks ✱
	Bones ✱
	Valium –
Planetarium ▲	Wood ✱
Araldite –	Bones ✱
Valium –	Moonlite ▲
Parasite –	

HERNIA

Parasite –	Rocks ✱	Slate ●●✱
Paladium –	Solarium ▲	Moonlite ▲
Onion –	Valium –	Herbirite –
		Paladium –
Rocks ✱	Slates✱	Bones ✱
Moonlite ▲	Araldite –	Yeridium –
Bethlium ▲	Parasite –	Aquarium –
	Paladium –	
Wood ✱	Wood ✱	Planetarium ▲
Moonlite ▲	Bones ✱	Herbirite –
Parasite –	Araldite –	Tedium –
	Aquarium –	

IBIZA

Wood ●●✱	Rocks ✱
Slate ✱	Planetarium ▲
Solarium ▲	Araldite –
Onion –	Tedium –
Bones ✱	Bones ✱
Moonlite ▲	Planetarium ▲
Bethlium ▲	Solarium ▲
Onion –	Tedium –

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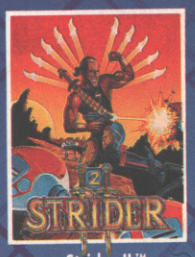
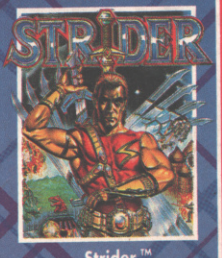
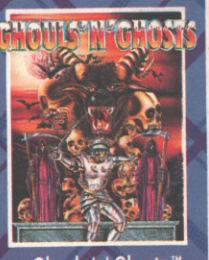


Strider II ™



Strider ™



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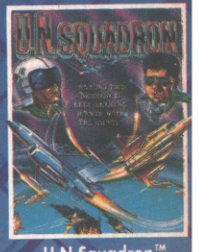
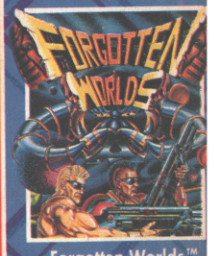
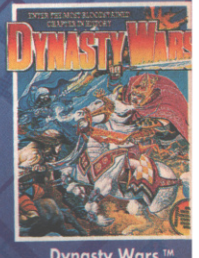
"A great shoot em'-up. Brilliant detail and addictive gameplay". *ZZAP (C64).*



U.N Squadron™



Forgotten Worlds™



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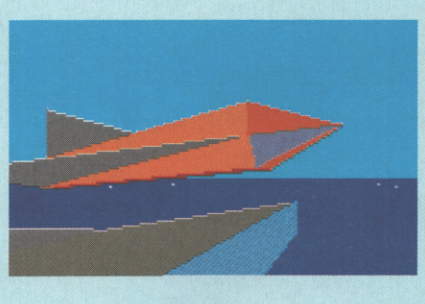
CARRIER COMMAND
(Mirror Image)



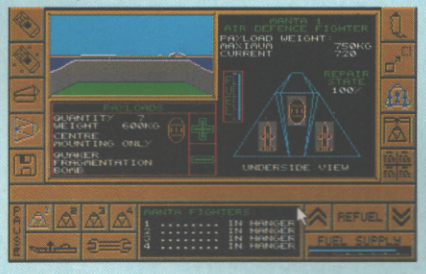
Another classic re-release, Darren Riddle from Cleckheaton thought you might like to share his wealth of knowledge on the game, so he sent us this little collection of useful tips.

1. General Strategy
Make the first two islands captured factory islands, the next two resource islands, and the next four defence islands.
The high number of defence islands is to protect your home island – if this falls it's game over. Keep advancing towards the enemy base island – once this is captured the enemy supply line is destroyed, effectively immobilising the enemy carrier.

2. Fuel And Supply Priorities
These should be set as soon as possible as supplies run low very quickly. Carrier fuel should be high priority, with Manta and Walrus fuel on medium. High priorities in supplies should be Mantas, Walruses, ACCBs, long range coms pods, all missiles, and viewing drones. Keep moving the supply islands up or you'll end up stranded without fuel. Try to have a number of routes from your home island to your stockpile island so it's harder for your opponent to cut your supply lines.

3. Attacking Occupied Islands
Method 1 – Cruise missiles
Deploy all drones to the rear of the ship and then reverse towards the island. Stop the carrier before you run aground and launch a viewing drone. When the command centre comes into view, let it have it with a couple of missiles. When the command centre is destroyed, simply occupy the island with a Walrus armed with an ACCB.
Method 2 – Mantas
Arm a Manta with 7 missiles (these CAN be used against ground targets), launch it and fly at the command centre at full speed, ignoring the attacks which will be coming from all sides. Launch missiles at the command centre until it is destroyed, then occupy with a Walrus as usual.

4. The Cheat Mode
Pause the game, type 'THE BEST IS YET TO BE' and press '+' on the keypad. This renders all your craft invincible, meaning you can land Mantas on enemy runways to refuel! It also gives your Mantas the ability to hover happily without using fuel.



NIGHTBREED
(Ocean)

Type 'RISEN FROM THE DEAD' for infinite lives.

STARFLIGHT
(Electronic Arts)

Another Star Performer, you can get loads of money in this interesting space exploration game by going to the Trade Depot in Starport, going to 'Buy', and selecting Endurium (fuel). Type in 'q11111111' and the required volume and bucketloads of dosh should immediately become yours to squander at will.

METAL MASTERS
(Silmarils)

Press F4 during play to completely immobilise your enemy. You can now thump seven shades of whatever you like out of him with complete impunity. Ha!

CHUCK ROCK

Those luvverly boys at Core Design have come up with this player's guide to their classy prehistoric platformer (86 percent in Issue One). Thanks, Core!

SPECIFIC ALIENS – LEVEL ONE
Coconut throwers – protect your head with a rock.
Tiny big mouth – stand still and when he jumps to attack, jump straight up and kick.
Orange hammer dude – see above.
Homing pterodactyls – important to hit straight away. The best way is to wait for them and when they stop above you, move away quickly and hit them as they swoop down.
Splitting chargers – good timing is required. Stand still and butt early.

END OF LEVEL BOSS – FRANK THE TRICERATOPS
The safest place to stand is at the back of the screen on the raised floor (not the floating platform). Grab your rock and throw it at Frank when he's charging at you (about halfway across the screen) then jump out of the way onto the raised floor. When Frank is running the other way, go and grab your rock again and repeat this procedure until Frank cops it.

LEVEL TWO
Head in mud dinosaur – when in range he will chuck mud off his head at you. Jump towards him and kill him with a kick.
Speedy – runs like jiminy. Butt him early.
Rock falls – protect your head by carrying a rock.
Fire breather – take him out with a flying kick.
Mud man – only hits you when out of the ground. Unkillable, so watch your timing.

END OF LEVEL ALIEN – STEVE THE SABRE TOOTHED TIGER
This is quite difficult, so get in quick and try to trap him in a corner. If he's going to roar, get as far away from him as possible.

LEVEL THREE
Little frogs – leap around a lot. Get in there just as they land.
Crab – be careful with this one. When he gets in range he lunges and snaps quickly. Be ready with a butt or a kick.
Swordfish – rush in and get him before he starts swiping with his sword.
Lobster – he likes somersaulting, so watch out for the fast twists towards you.
Diver – jumps in water when you're in range, so watch out above you.

END OF LEVEL ALIEN – NESSY
Align yourself with the biggest part of her belly about a centimetre away and start kicking. This requires good control so get in there straight away, but if you don't align first time get back to the surface for air.

LEVEL FOUR
Icicle – watch the ceilings for these falling spikes. Your best bet is to nip under and back away instantly.
Sneezers – when he starts to breathe in, get out of range of his 'ACHOO!', then rush in and take him out.
Cold dude – a couple of fast butts for this one as he takes a couple of hits.
Sliding frozen dudes – stand still and butt early.
Snowball throwers – wait until he throws, jump the snowball, then kick him quickly.
Little mammoths – watch these, they're quick, so butt early.

END OF LEVEL ALIEN – WAYNE THE WOOLLY MAMMOTH
This requires perfect positioning. When Wayne jumps to his most forward position, get in there and start kicking but remember your position. After a few kicks get ready to dodge the snowballs. First stand approximately three inches from the left and then an inch from the left for the second set. Then get totally to the left and keep pushing left to counter-attack Wayne's suck. After this return to your attack position.

LEVEL FIVE
Angel/devil dude – butt him and get away you can butt again if he turns into a devil.
Bandaged dino – runs around blind, so watch out for his erratic turns.
False teeth spitter – get in quick before he manages to spit his teeth out. If you're good, see if you can kill both the dino and his false teeth!
Amoeba – this one homes in on you so take it out as soon as possible.
Hearty – nip in to trigger him off and back away to time your kick/butt.
Leaping worms – watch out for their big jumps. Get in just as they land.
Big worm – unkillable, so watch yourself. Use your rock to jump over them if need be.

END OF LEVEL ALIEN – TIM THE TYRANNOSAURUS REX
Timing is the key. Wait on the platforms about halfway across and watch for the first move of his attack. Back away and let him carry through with his move, then get in quick for a couple of kicks, then repeat the procedure. Take your time!

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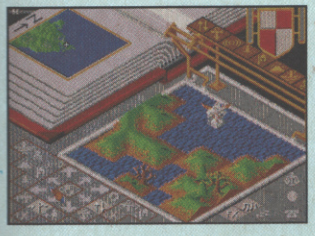
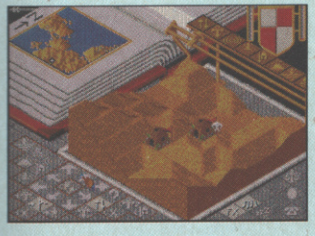
POPULOUS

With the recent re-release of this god-sim classic on EA's Star Performers label, what could be a better time to print this selection of level codes from the first 140 worlds? Dig those crazy names!

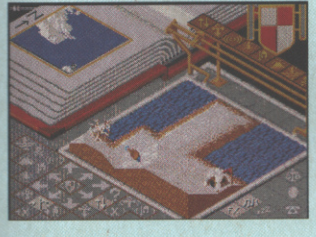
0 - GENESIS



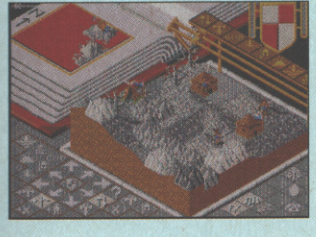
1 - HURTOUTORD
3 - TIMUSLUG
4 - CALDIEHILL



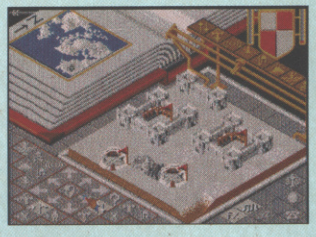
5 - SCOQUEMET
6 - SWAVER
7 - KILLPEING
8 - EOAOZORD
9 - BURWILCON
10 - MORINGILL
11 - NIMHILL
12 - BILCEMENT



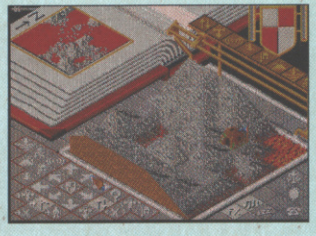
14 - WEAVHIPHAM
15 - ALPOUTOND



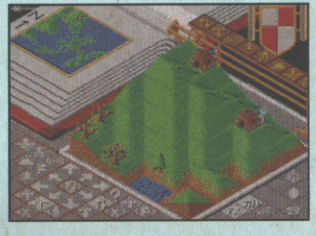
18 - HOBDIETORY
19 - BUGQUEEND
20 - SHADTED
21 - CORPEHAM



23 - SADWILLOW
24 - LOWINGICK
26 - VERYMEEND

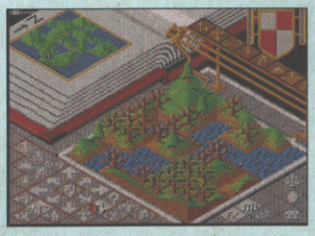


27 - MINMPME
31 - DOUUSICK
32 - SHIDEHOLE

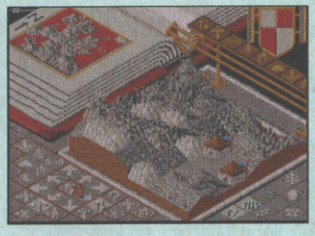


34 - JOSTME
36 - CALOZBOY
37 - SCOWILDOR
38 - SWAINGPAL
40 - EOAMELAS

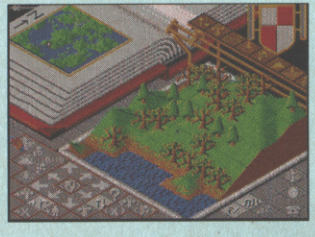
41 - BURMPAL
42 - MORHIPPIL
43 - NIMOUTJOB
45 - RINGBPAL
46 - WEAVINPERT
49 - IMMPEPIL
50 - HOBOZJOB
52 - SHADOGODON



54 - BINMEOUT
57 - QAZOUTER
58 - VERYELIN
59 - MINGBDON
60 - HAMINAR
61 - FUTLOPLUG

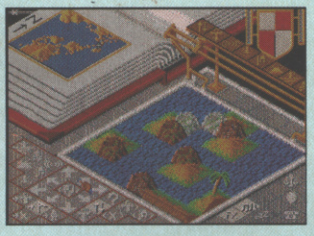


63 - DOUPEBAR
65 - HURTIKEING
70 - SWAHIPMET
72 - EOAEING

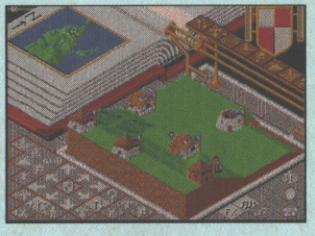


75 - NIMLOPILL
77 - RINGOXMET
78 - WEAVEAED
83 - BUGMPTORY

84 - SHADKOPEND
85 - CORGAZME
88 - LOWINLOW
90 - VERYYTORY
92 - HAMEAME
93 - FUTIKEOLD
95 - DOUDOW
96 - SHIMEICK
98 - JOSKOPLAS
102 - SWAINDOR
104 - EOAYHOLE



107 - NIMIKEPIL
111 - ALPDIPERT
112 - BADKOPOUT
114 - HOBEPIL
115 - BUGGBJOB
119 - SADOXOUT
120 - LOWEAT



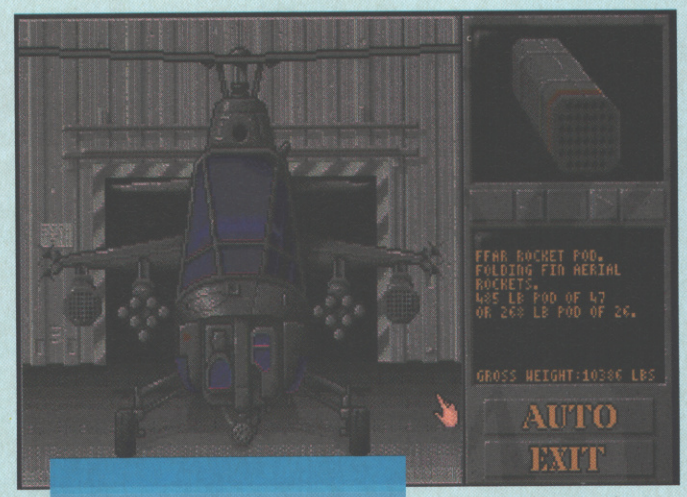
122 - VERYQUEER
123 - MINULIN
125 - FUTDIMAR
128 - SHIEBAR
132 - CALYMAR

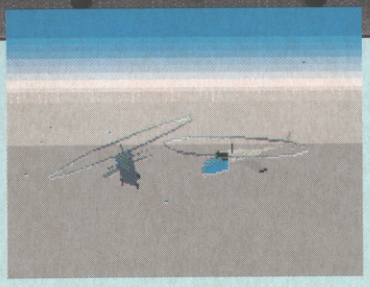
135 - KILLDIEMET
136 - EAOQUEED
137 - BURUING
139 - NIMDICON

140 - BILKOPILL

THUNDERHAWK

Can it be? Yes, it's even more straight-from-the-horse's-mouth programmer tips, this time for Core Design's excellent airborne blaster *Thunderhawk*. If you can't play it now, you might as well give up. So without further delay, over to Macintosh Avery...





Put an end to those shot-down-helicopter blues – with these top tips from *Thunderhawk*'s main man, Macintosh Avery.

1. Remember to fly low I usually fly between 40 and 100 feet, this keeps you below most of the early warning radars. (If you have to fly above 250 feet, make sure it's not for long because the longer you're up there, the easier the radar will spot you and send out fighters to investigate).

2. I always use the auto weapons selection for most missions. The only changes I make are to replace FFARS with AGM214 Firestorms as these are more accurate (the only problem with AGM214s is that if your nose optic gets damaged, you can't get a weapons lock). Also, if you have any missions that require the taking out of enemy early warning radar, use the 122L Smarm missiles that home in onto any strong radar source. Just point the helicopter in the general direction of the target and raise the nose up slightly before you fire (this gives the missile a better chance of locking on to a strong signal). This system can be used at long distances, so you don't have to get within sight of the target to hit it!

3. Listen out for the missile warning. As soon as you hear it, check the threat display to see what type of missile has been fired. Normally it will be an infra-red missile, so launch a flare decoy and also turn away from the missile if it's in front of you. Missiles fly in a straight line and will fly through anything to get to their target, including you! The same technique goes for radar guided missiles, just use chaff to decoy them.

Another tip is to activate the infra-red jamming system. This will stop most of the ground-based infra-red missiles, but it won't stop the air-launched ones. The same rules apply for radar jamming. Warning: Constant use of jammers makes you a better target to air and ground units, use them sparingly.

4. Try to use the terrain as the enemy can't fly through hills, and enemy helicopters have to fly over them. Watch out for the hills yourself though as you will crash if you get too close to them. ('Wow!' - impressed-but-geographically-naive reader).

5. Enemy fighters can be a bit of a pain, especially the SU-25 Frogfoot. This has a nasty habit of flying very low and firing a large amount of missiles in your direction. Use your chaff and flares until the Frogfoot runs out of missiles – he will then switch to cannon. Use AIM-11 missiles to knock them down (these are fire and forget missiles and the fighters cannot dodge them). If you have AIM-10 Cobra missiles, the technique is different. It takes two AIM-10s to destroy a fighter compared to one AIM-11. Also, the enemy can use flares to decoy them, so they are less effective against enemy aircraft. MiG-29 Fulcrums fly higher and faster than the SU-25s, but they have fewer missiles. The same techniques apply to the MiG-29 as to the SU-25, but try to get a missile lock when the fighter turns to face you head-on. Don't waste missiles when they have passed you, as they can outrun them. If you've run out of missiles and are taking hits from the enemy fighters, fly low around 30-60 feet, as they can't hit you very well at low heights.

6. Enemy helicopters
There are two types of attack helicopter you will run into, the KA-136 Hokum and the MIL-24 Hind. The Hind is the most common helicopter you will find – it is armed with missiles and cannon. It isn't very good at dodging missiles, so getting a missile lock on it with an AIM-11 will normally seal its fate.

The Hokum is just a bit special (I really like these babies) – it can out-turn you and out-climb you, so the first thing to do when you locate one is to get a missile lock quickly. Use AIM-11s as the Hokum can't dodge these, but it can dodge some AIM-10 attacks. If you run out of missiles and only have your cannon left, then you're in trouble! The only thing to do is face the Hokum and cannon it to death, but it can dodge cannon fire as well (!), so the best technique is to wait for it to stop dodging and then fire your cannon. The Hokum will climb to avoid your fire, so as soon as you shoot, put on full throttle and try to keep with him. (It's more fun if you don't use missiles against Hokums – it's just like dogfighting for real!)

7. Ground units
These can normally be despatched with AGM-214 Hellfires or FFARs.

8. Bombing
Always hit the target dead centre, otherwise you will miss. Also if you use MK81 bombs, fly at 250 feet. Any lower and the blast will cause damage to the Thunderhawk. If you use MK82 bombs, the same applies, except you'll have to fly at over 500 feet.

HELP (I NEED SOMEBODY)

In response to many requests, AMIGA POWER is proud, nay, ecstatic to bring you a brand new addition to Complete Control (the biggest and best tips section in the country). In this section, though, we, er, don't actually give you any tips. (Well, most of the time, anyway). 'Help (I Need Somebody)' is where you, the readers, write in with the game problems that you just can't overcome and you, the other readers who know the solution, write in and share your knowledge. Or, if we know the answers ourselves, we'll just tell you straight away and save all that faffing around with middlemen. This month we're starting off the column with a few tricky ones that readers have sent in over the last few weeks which have got us foxed, so if you know how to help, drop us a line and we'll print the answer in the following issue.

From now on, send your questions (keep them as specific as possible, please) and answers to us at HELP (PROBLEMS) or HELP (SOLUTIONS), Complete Control, Amiga Power, 29 Monmouth St, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW.

Marc Dunkley of Dalkeith is destroying most of his body in frustration over *Shadow Of The Beast II*. He can reach the bit where all the levers for controlling the crane are, but he needs the password for the Eastern passage to get to Barloom's Kingdom, as well as lots of other info on completing the game in general.

Ben Ashdown of Leicester can't get anywhere at all on Lucasfilm's golden oldie *Maniac Mansion*, so if anyone can point him in the right direction he'd be eternally grateful.

Dave Moore of King's Lynn has a much simpler snag, he just wants cheat modes for Hewson's *Zynaps* and Gremlin's *HATE*. Anyone know?

Mr A. Bernascone of Shoreham-By-Sea is hopelessly stuck on Palace's *Voodoo Nightmare*. He's completed the first temple and all the other jobs (reuniting the lion cub and the lioness, saving the native etc), but he can't get any further. He can reach two other temples, but in one he's stuck behind some elephant tusks and the other one is pitch dark. "Restore a little sanity to my life", he pleads.

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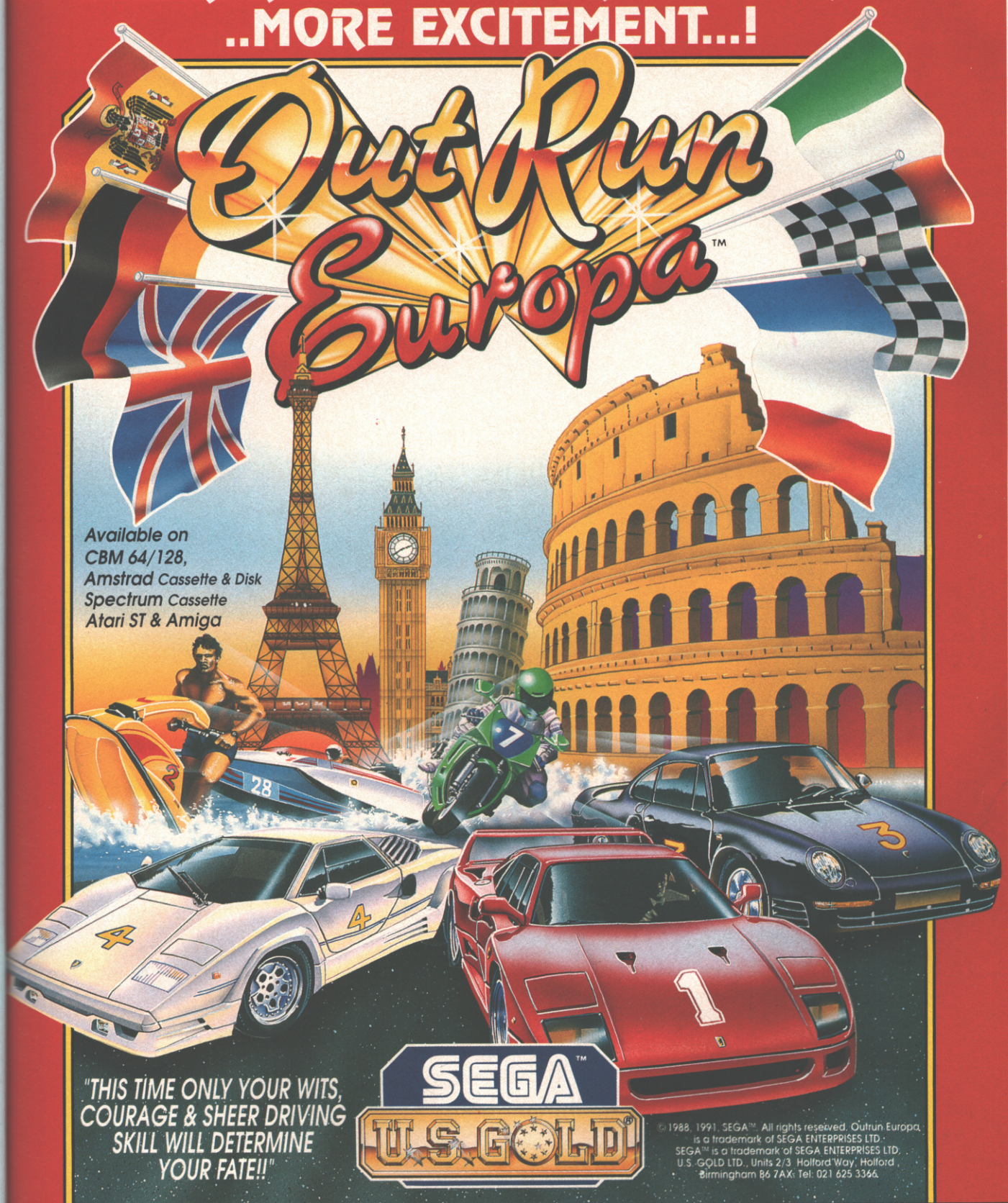

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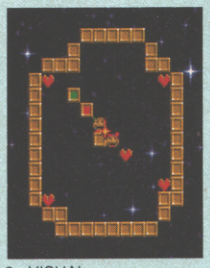
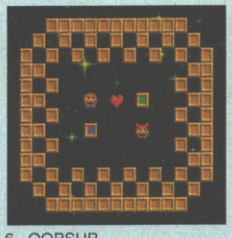
THE POWER

What? You can't possibly still be stuck on this, can you? Oh, okay then – try these passwords for the first 50 levels. (There aren't any codes for subsequent levels). We've even included some handy level maps for the hardest of them. What more could you possibly want from us? (No, don't answer that).

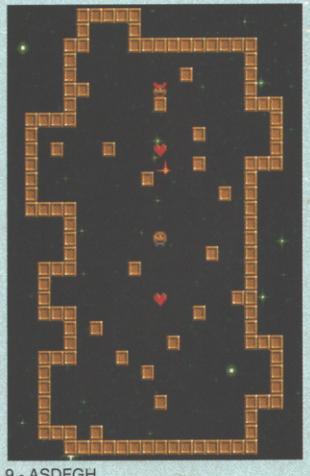
2 - LEVEL2



3 - VISUAL
4 - COWBOY
5 - URGENT



6 - OOPSUP
7 - TOPTEN
8 - D14DH7



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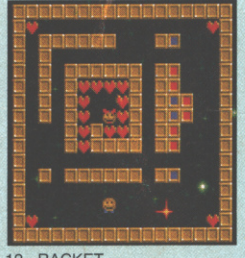

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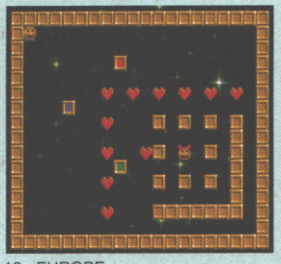

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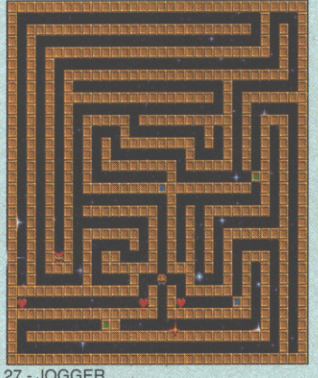

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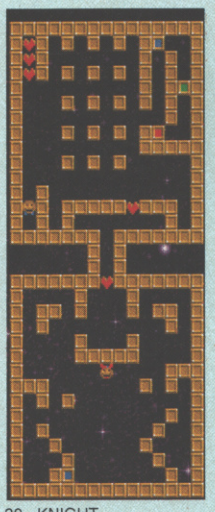

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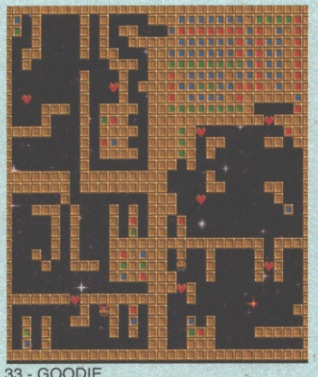

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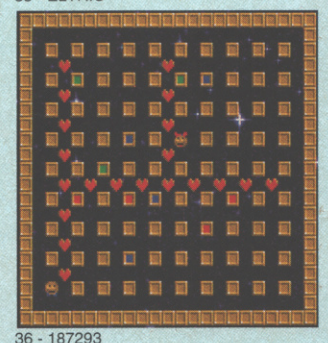

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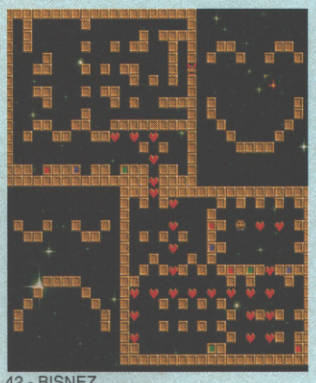

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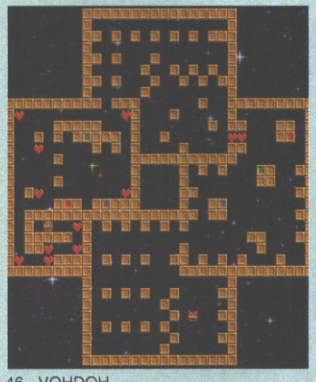

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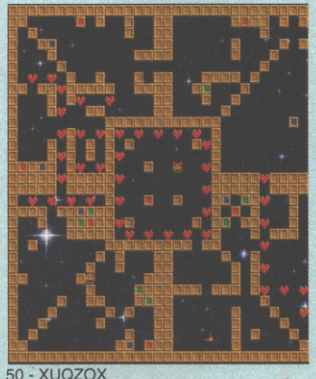

50 - XUQZOX

And that's all we have space for this in this edition of Complete Control. Next month Gary Penn finally gets to grips with the section to bring you the best in guides, tips and tasks. Don't miss it!

THE COMPLETE COLOUR SOLUTION

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Vidi ... No 1 in UK & Europe (Leading the way forward)

Amiga Computing: The best Amiga digitiser has had the technicolour treatment. Vidi must be one of the most exciting peripherals you can buy for your Amiga.

Micro Mart: When I first saw Vidi "in the flesh" as it were, at the CES show last September it looked to be the answer to a frustrated Digi View owner's dreams – in fact to see pictures appearing on screen without the customary two minutes wait seemed almost too good to be true. I have consistently produced more good quality pictures in the short time I have had Vidi than I ever did with Digiview.

Zero: Now under normal circumstances cheap usually means poor quality but this is not the case with Rombo. Why? cos Vidi-Amiga is the best digitiser for under £500 and I've tried them all.

Amiga Format: Where quality is concerned, Vidi produces some of the best results I've seen on any digitiser at any price.

Amiga User International: The latest addition to the Rombokit is called Vidi-RGB and brings this already impressive package to the realms of totally amazing. CONCLUSION: Who will find Vidi-Amiga useful? The answer to this is almost anyone with a video recorder or camera and a passing interest in graphics.

Get the most out of your Amiga by adding:

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The Worlds ultimate creative leisure product for your Amiga. Capture dynamic high resolution images into your Amiga in less than one second.

And Look No Filters

Images can now be grabbed from either colour video camera, home VCR or in fact any still video source. The traditional method of holding three colour filters in front of your video camera is certainly a thing of the past. Because Vidi splits the RGB colours electronically there are no focussing or movement problems experienced by some of our slower competitors. Lighting is also less of an issue as light is not being shut out by lens filters. Put all this together with an already proven Vidi-Amiga/VidiChrome combination and achieve what is probably the most consistant and accurate high quality 4096 colour images ever seen on the Amiga.

The colour solution is fully compatible with all Amiga's from a standard A500 to the ultimate A3000. No additional RAM is required to get up and running.

You will see from independant review comments that we are undoubtedly their first choice and that was before the complete solution was launched. If you have just purchased your Amiga and are not sure what to buy next, then just read the comments or send for full review and demo disk.

Actual unretouched digitised screenshot

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- Create windows in both mono & colour.
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NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS

THE OTHER MAGAZINE STUART CAMPBELL WRITES FOR

You're into Amiga games in a big way. You must be, for you read Britain's biggest and best Amiga games magazine (er, that's *Amiga Power*). And you're prepared to pay £2.95 to make sure you get it.

But is *Amiga Power* enough? If you're an Amiga games player with a larger appetite than even this magazine can satisfy, perhaps you should try *New Computer Express*.

Why? Well, for one thing it's weekly. That means it's always first with all the big Amiga news stories. Whatever happens to the Amiga, it's in *Express* first.

Secondly, it's got a cover disk every week featuring Amiga game demos, Amiga PD and more.

And thirdly, it's got Amiga games news, previews, charts and reviews – every week, and penned by none other than Stuart Campbell, the well known scourge of dreadful games and the world's worst Sean Connery imitator.

All this for £1.50. If you've finished Amiga Power, give it a try.

Express: at £1.50, worth a punt

FIRST SAMURAI

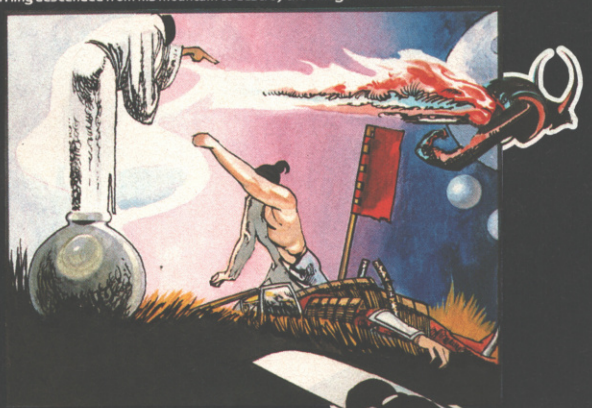
image works

Long ago in a tiny village in Ancient Japan . . .

a young Samurai lived and studied peacefully with his master the Lord Akira, until . . . . . .

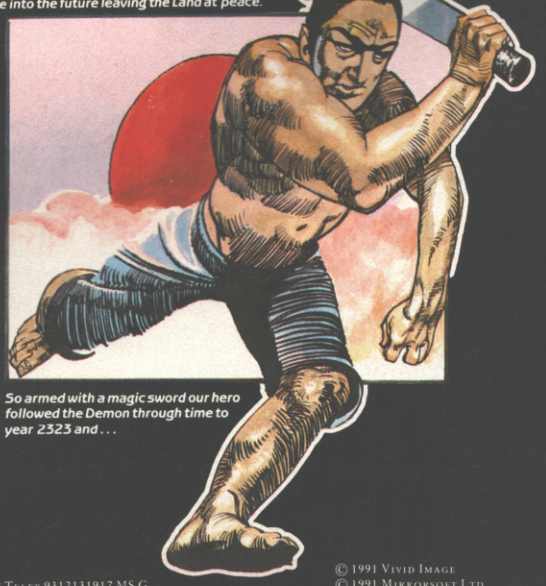
a Demon King descended from his mountain to destroy the village and all its inhabitants . . .

slaying the Warrior Lord and leaving only the young Samurai to tell the tale.



He called upon the Wizard Mage who forced the Demon to flee into the future leaving the Land at peace.

However, the Samurai vowed he would have no peace until he had avenged his master's death with the aid of the wizard.



So armed with a magic sword our hero followed the Demon through time to year 2323 and . . .

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FOOTBALL CRAZY

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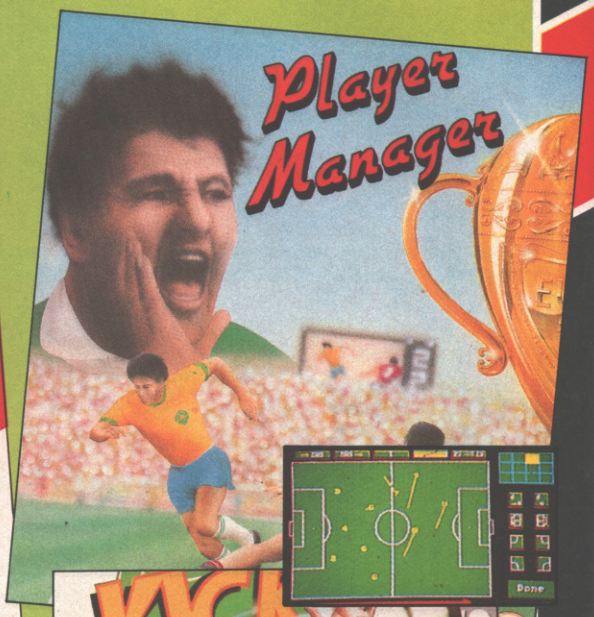

KICK OFF 2

AMIGA FORMAT	- Best footy game to have appeared on any machine.
AMIGA USER INT	- The best computer game ever.
ST FORMAT	- What a game! Gem to Play. Magic.
ST ACTION	- The best game ever to grace the ST. Highest accolade I can give.
The Ace	- Brilliant. Buy-Buy-Buy.
The One	- Ultimate Soccer simulation

PLAYER MANAGER

ST Action	- A stroke of pure genius.
The One	- Exceptional. Most involved, rewarding and playable.
Amiga Format	- Enthralling and Addictive.
ST Format	- Brilliant.

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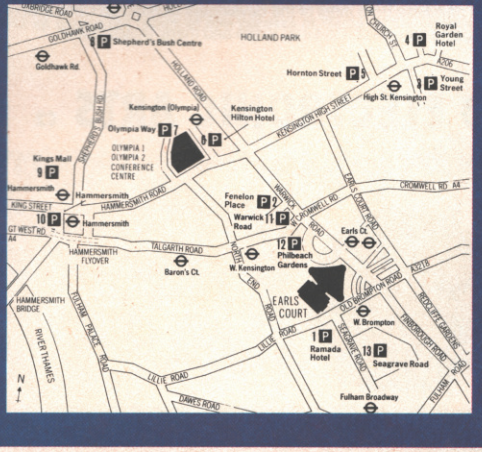
There's only one big consumer show this year – World Of Commodore. If you're an Amiga owner (and we're willing to bet most of you are), it's the first time there's ever been a massive consumer show dedicated to your machine in this country! And even if you're not, it's still of massive interest – following the failure of the ECES earlier this year the World Of Commodore will be the ONLY large scale computer entertainment show open to the public. It's *the* place to go if you want to see all the new Christmas games.

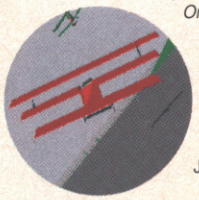
Being 'The World of Commodore' it's not all about games, of course – you'll be able to check out the latest hardware, serious software and gadgets too, then pick up a bargain at one of the many retail stands. This is AMIGA POWER though and games are our business – that's why our show guide concentrates on those stands which guarantee serious entertainment value (you can check out the rest at your leisure once you're there). For everything you need know, then, just flick the page...

THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH!



Earls Court 2: just about the poshest, and certainly the newest, exhibition centre in London. Looking like a futuristic train station it has hundreds of advantages over the original Earls Court and similar 'rivals'. Just count 'em: it's brand new so it doesn't have lots of tatty bits hanging off the edges; it doesn't smell like someone's been sick in it; it's much better ventilated so it won't get horribly hot; it's got lots of posh facilities (bar, cafe, creche); it's got wider aisles than most shows; it's right next to Earl's Court tube, Gloucester Road tube and comes equipped with (hurrah!) a massive car park, it's (Snip! Ed)

1 MICROPROSE C10



Top MicroProse game has to be this month's cover game *Formula One Grand Prix*, Geoff Crammond's sequel to the marvellous *Stunt Car Racer*, and one of only three full price games ever to earn a 90 plus mark from AMIGA POWER. Check out just how good it is for yourself here on the MicroProse stand, where it shares space with *PGA Tour*-rival *MicroProse Golf*, split-screen, multi-time zone dog-fight sim *Air Duel* and straight WWI flight sim *Knights Of The Sky* amongst others. Jolly good show all round really.

***Air Duel*: previewed in the very first issue of POWER, Glynn (*Warhead*) Williams' 3D blaster is finally ready (and it's at World Of Commodore).**

2 GAMES ARCADE

A mere fifty pence buys you entry to this games arcade packed with oodles of Amigas and C64s running a vast assortment of new games, including most of the Christmas hits you'll see dotted around the stands (but probably be unable to get much of a go on). The reason we're charging money? It's not because we're tight, it's so we've got something to give to Great Ormond Street hospital and other worthy charities...

3 VIRGIN B2/B4

Lots of exciting things going on in Virgin-land, but the best of them have to be a) your chance to (at last!) see *Realms*, Steve Turner's eagerly-awaited attempt at a god sim, for yourself (Steve's company, Graftgold, did the Amiga version of our all-time favourite *Rainbow Islands*, so hopes are high) and b) the presence of top snooker star Jimmy White. His stunning *Whirlwind Snooker* game will be on display, and the man himself will be around on the Friday to show off his skills at the game, as well as sign copies on the various retail stands. Indeed, if you buy a copy at the show it'll probably be autographed – and you might even manage to get your photo taken with him as a souvenir! That's not all though – you'll be able to check out previews of unfinished games like *Shuttle*, *Vengeance Of Excalibur*, *Conan The Cimerian* and *Floor 13* at the same time too!

Jimmy White: Meet the man, play his game (and perhaps buy it and get your picture taken with him too!)

***Realms*: Could Graftgold's effort be the season's best god-sim? You can decide for yourself at World Of Commodore!**

4 CDTV CITY

Whether you've seen a CDTV in the flesh yet – and plenty of us haven't – or not, you're bound to be keen to check out what's going on here. After all, where else are you going to see new titles from most of the developers working on Commodore's sleek black baby, including Mirrorsoft, On-Line, Virgin and many (many) more..?

5 ELECTRONIC ARTS C2

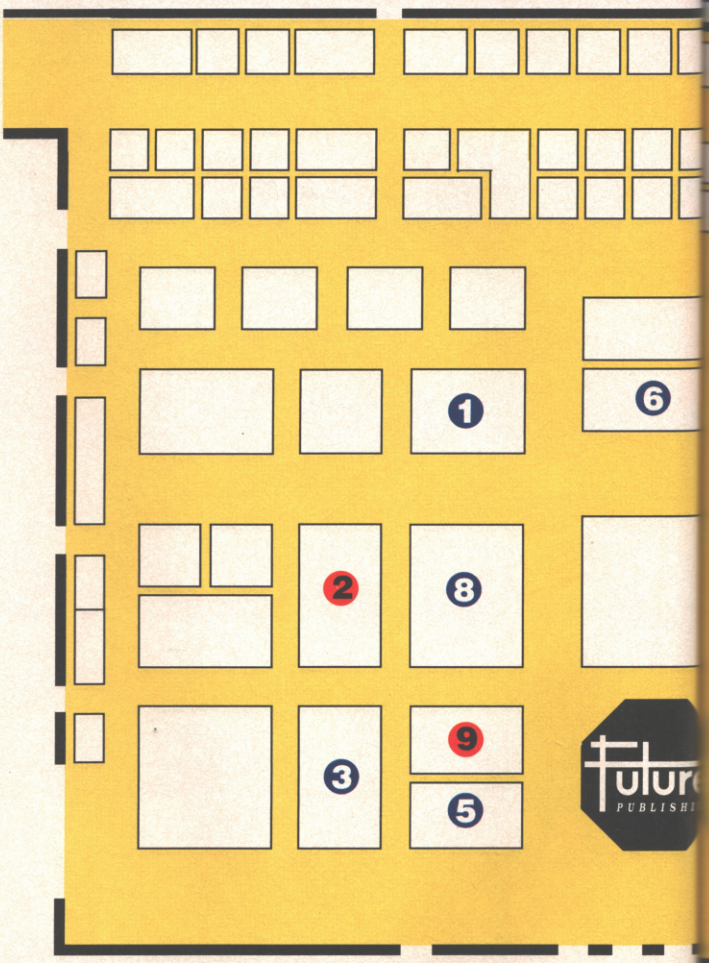
Birds Of Prey is this year's big 'is that still not ready yet?' game (it was last year's too, for that matter) but now it seems we're nearly there. You'll be able to find out just what Jez San and his Argonaut chums have been working on all this time at the EA stand, where it will share space with Interplay's *Castles* (the high-profile medieval strategy game), *Powermonger*, *World War One Edition* (this add-on disk is finally ready), underground RPG game *The Black Crypt* and – yes! – *Populous II*! We'll say nothing more about that last one here, except that if you want to see something really stunning, this is the place to be...

***Birds Of Prey*: will it be ready (everyone seems to be saying 'yes' – and meaning it this time too) and if so, will it be any good? Find out at World Of Commodore!**

WORLD OF COMMODORE

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW...

● World of Commodore is being held at Earls Court 2 from the 15th to the 17th of November. It's being organised jointly by Commodore and Future Publishing (yes, the people behind AMIGA POWER) so you're guaranteed a great time!



FUTURE PUBLISHING

Ahem, that's us. Not only will we have one of the bestest stands at the show – and the first one you see as you walk in the door! – we'll also have some of the very best stuff going on here too. Hold onto your hats...

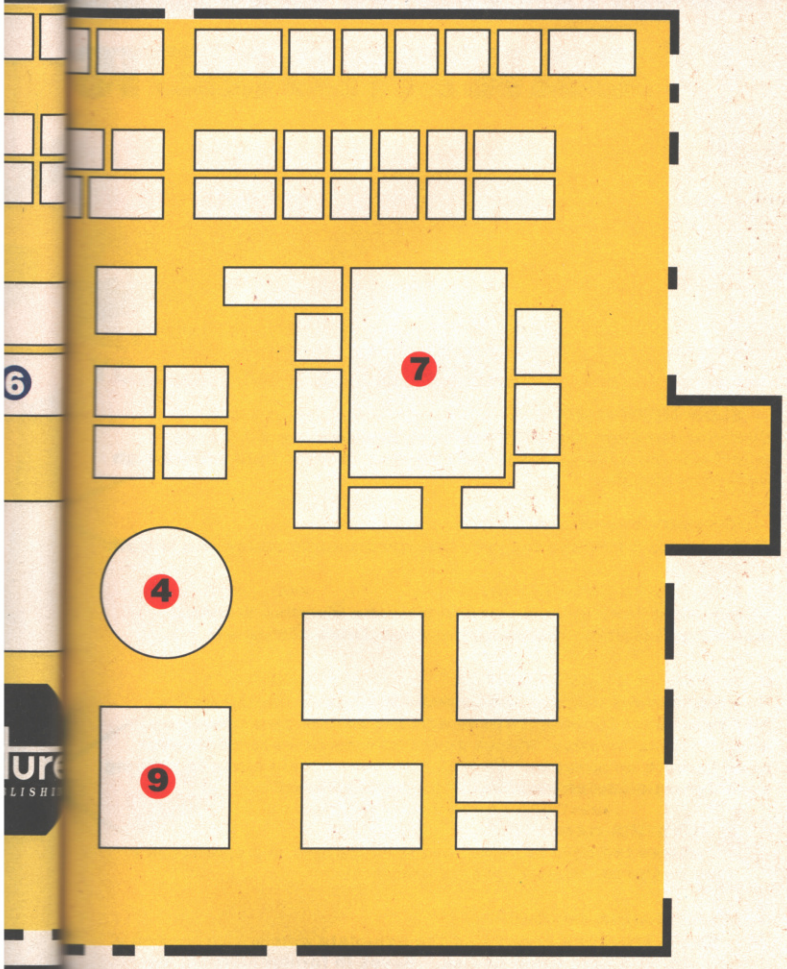
• Meet the programmers! Top teams (including Bullfrog, the Bitmaps and Graftgold) will be doing talks on the Future stand throughout the three days!

• Meet the magazines! Not only will you be able to talk to the teams behind AMIGA POWER, Amiga Format, Amiga Shopper, Commodore Format and New Computer Express, we'll also be hosting question and answer sessions in a special mini-theatre set-up at the back of the stand. Whether you want to nab an autograph off Gary Penn or have a shouting match with Stuart Campbell, the place to do it is right here! Come armed with all your best suggestions, questions and complaints – it should be lots of fun...

• Buy the magazines! Here's where your chance to pick up that elusive back issue – or indeed, buy the new mags hot off the presses and before they reach the shops! And in case you've forgotten the mags are...

OF DORE '91

● Doors open 9.00am on all three days and kicking out time is 5.30pm on the Friday and Saturday, 4.00pm on Sunday. Tickets are £6.00 for adults and £4.00 for under-14s, although you can save money (over a quid a ticket!) by pre-booking – check out the special forms included in the last couple of issues of this magazine or ring our special Ticket Hotline on 051 356 5085.



AMIGA POWER That's us! Not only are we the very best Amiga games mag on the planet (of course), not only are we the biggest selling pure games mag in the country, we're the sexiest too. Hurrah!

AMIGA SHOPPER Britain's only 100 percent serious Amiga mag, and a real barg at only 99p a copy. It's so good, even if it wasn't the only one, it'd still be the best!

AMIGA FORMAT Co-organisers of the show, Europe's best-selling Amiga mag – by a mile and a half – and quite simply THE place to go for everything you ever wanted to know about your Amiga. The Amiga Format team will be around to handle all the techie questions that would (to be honest) quite baffle the AP crew.

Commodore FORMAT Now Britain's only 100 percent Commodore 64-dedicated mag, but it's been the best for years. It's a corker!

NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS For the latest weekly computer news it has to be NCE. Now with a Amiga/ST/PC Tri-format disk each ish!

6 GREMLIN D8

"We're just hoping that everyone has a good time at the show," says Gremlin's Ian Richardson. "There'll be a really informal atmosphere at our stand." There'll also be a lot about cars – one particular car, to be precise, as Gremlin are ignoring the rest of their (generally impressive) Christmas releases and are concentrating on the real biggie – *Lotus Turbo Challenge II*. With a huge four player set-up running *Lotus II* on a giant TV wall, Gremlin will be organising a Turbo Challenge of their own, with a prize each day for the fastest time on the first circuit. Goodies on offer will be worth about £500 each, with compo sponsors including Commodore, Future Publishing (that's us), Lotus and (of course) Gremlin themselves. It's like a super version of the Lotus Challenge Gremlin so successfully ran at the ECES *last* year – expect to see big queues...

***Lotus II*: Giant four-player racing for big prizes make *Lotus II* a Turbo Challenge worth winning. In fact, it's so big, Gremlin aren't going to have room to show many of their other games at World Of Commodore.**

7 MULTIMEDIA THEATRE

Programmers, magazine people and the odd surprise guest will be giving talks, hosting conferences and generally being 'entertaining' in this giant purpose-built theatre. EA, Ocean, Mindscape and MicroProse (amongst others) will be showing off new products in special sessions, while the editors of Amiga Format, Amiga Shopper and – yes! – AMIGA POWER will be holding a special question-and-answer session each day. For the full list of what's going on check out the signs outside the theatre – there's bound to be something of interest to everyone.

Hurrah! It's the AMIGA POWER team. Some of us will be up and speaking in the theatre

Adrian Parr, boss of MicroProse UK: they'll be demonstrating new product in the Multimedia Theatre

8 OCEAN C8

Always ones to make a big splash, the Manchester software giants will be hauling out their traditional wagon-load of big name games, including the much talked about 3D version of *RoboCop III*. If you're at the show make sure you take a look at this game, because it a) features some of the best solid vector graphics yet seen on the Amiga, and b) signposts an exciting new direction for movie licences.

It doesn't end there though – more traditional thrills come in the form of ultra-violent *Smash TV* and Sky-TV promoted *WWF* (*World Wrestling Federation*), while the more high-brow will enjoy the long delayed space epic, erm, *Epic* and the highly involved earth sim inventively dubbed *Sim Earth*.

***RoboCop III*: Ocean make a giant bound forward for big movie licences, rendering everything in solid 3D. With one version of Mirrorsoft's *Alien III* game following similar lines, you could be seeing the future of film licenses at World Of Commodore...**

9 MINDSCAPE E4

One question which is bound to be on everyone's lips is: "Just how good is *Knightmare*?" It's a straight version of the popular role playing TV show of the same name, which may not sound too interesting until you realise it's been written by *Bombuzal*-creator Tony Crowther, using the same play system as his popular *Captive*. For once we could be about to see a TV-based game that'll really screw up your social life.

Add to that cheeky arcade romps like *Paperboy II* and more sophisticated PC-originated products like *4D Sports Boxing* and you can see there'll be something for everyone on the Mindscape stand – it looks like 1992 will be the year the US based publishers really make a big splash in the UK.

***4D Sports Boxing*: Different, weird, odd-looking, esoteric even – but it's still a beat-'em-up. And it's at the World Of Commodore show.**

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- **SAVE THE ENTIRE PROGRAM IN MEMORY TO DISK**

Special compacting techniques enable up to 3 programs to fit on one disk. Now saves directly to disk as Amiga Dos - reloads independently of the cartridge - even transfer to hard drive! Works with up to 2 Megs of Ram - even 1 Meg Chip Mem (Fatter Agnus).

NEW **SUPER POWERFUL TRAINER MODE -** now with DEEP trainer. Even better than before - allows you to generate more or even infinite lives, fuel, ammo. Perfect as a Trainer Mode to get you past that "impossible" level. Easy to use.

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NEW **BURST NIBBLER.** Now this super disk copier program is built into Action Replay Mk III. Just imagine a superfast, efficient disk copier program at the press of a key - no more waiting.

- **SAVE PICTURES AND MUSIC TO DISK**

Pictures and sound samples can be saved to disk. Files are saved directly in IFF format suitable for use with all the major graphic and music packages. Samples are displayed as screen waveform.

NEW **PAL or NTSC MODES SELECTABLE -** Useful for removing ugly borders when using NTSC software. (Works only with newer Agnus chips).

NEW **MANY MORE INSTANT CLI COMMANDS -** like Rename, Relabel, Copy, etc.

- **SLOW MOTION MODE**

Now you can slow down the action to your own pace. Easily adjustable from full speed to 20% speed. Ideal to help you through the tricky parts!

- **RESTART THE PROGRAM**

Simply press a key and the program will continue where you left off.

- **FULL STATUS REPORTING**

At the press of a key now you can view the Machine Status, including Fast Ram, Chip Ram, RamDisk, Drive Status, etc.

- **POWERFUL PICTURE EDITOR**

Now you can manipulate and search for screens throughout memory. Over 50 commands to edit the picture plus unique on screen status "overlay" shows all the information you could ever need to work on screens. No other product comes close to offering such dynamic screen handling of frozen programs!!

NEW **JOYSTICK HANDLER -** allows the user to select Joystick instead of Keypresses - very useful for many keyboard programs.

- **MUSIC SOUND TRACKER**

With Sound Tracker you can find the complete music in programs , demos,etc. and save them to disk. Saves in format suitable for most track player programs. Works with loads of programs!!

- **AUTOFIRE MANAGER**

From the Action Replay III preference screen you can now set up autofire from 0 to 100%. Just imagine continuous fire power? Joystick 1 and 2 are set separately for that extra advantage!

NEW **IMPROVED RAM EXPANSION SUPPORT.** Now many more external Ram Expansions will work with all Action Replay III commands.

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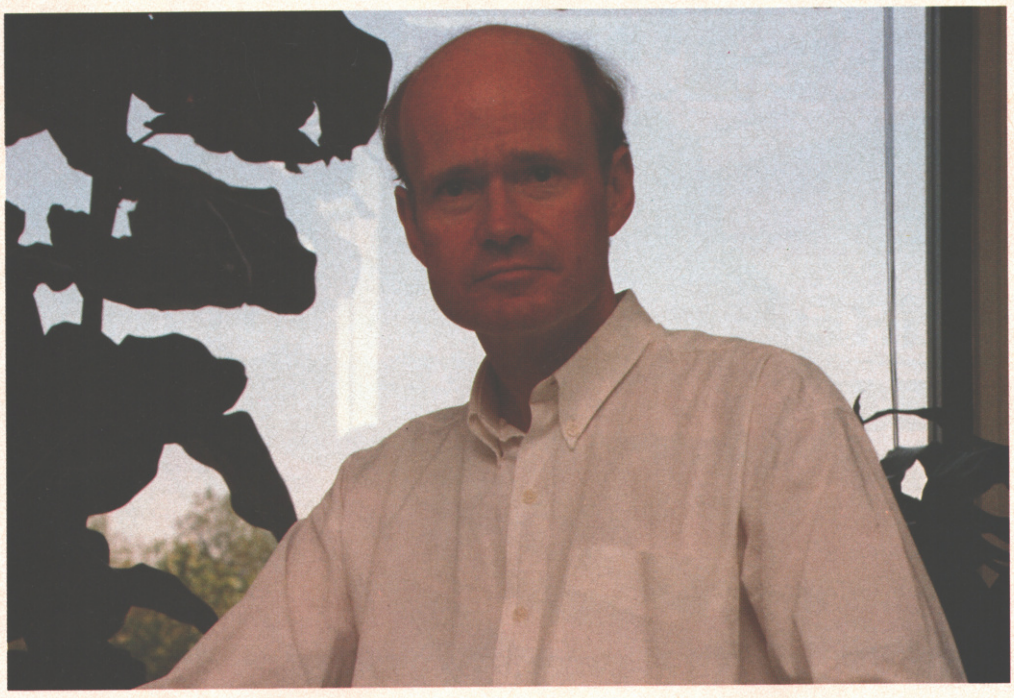

Doug Glen, head-honcho at Lucasfilm Games

THE FORCE: THE LUCASFILM INTERVIEW

Consistently excellent, Lucasfilm has been behind some of the best games of the last five years. Now two of its leading lights explain the secret of their success. Matt Bielby travels to tinseltown...

Regular readers will no doubt be getting quite familiar with the words 'Monkey' and 'Island' – as in the classic phrase 'it's not as good as *Monkey Island*.' Getting boring, isn't it?

The thing is, we just can't help it. *Monkey Island* has spoiled us – once you've seen even one game with this much wit and imagination, most everything else comes across as rather feeble minded and dull. Here, in creators Lucasfilm, are a group of game designers who know exactly where they're going and what it is they're trying to achieve – rare enough itself in this industry – and look more than capable of doing it too. We've been intrigued for a while, but when you think that the stuff they've got lined up for the next twelve months looks set to make *Monkey Island* look as primitive as, well, that benchmark game rendered everything else, it seemed like high time we talked to Lucasfilm...

Doug Glen is General Manager of the Games Division at Lucasfilm – as such he's pretty much in charge of everything that happens development-wise (and otherwise) at the company. Who better then to ask all those big and important questions, like what makes Lucasfilm different, what are they trying to do exactly – and why (seemingly) can't anyone else manage it?

First off a big question – what do you think of the software industry as it stands at the moment?

The way I see it is that we're currently at the equivalent of what 1908 was to the movie industry – that was when they began to get the first voices on a wax cylinder and then play it so the sound was in sync with the moving picture. That's what we're doing here with the new Lucasfilm games – we're just starting to get sound and particularly speech incorporated as an important part of the game.

And where does that take us?

Who knows? Back in the movies it was about 1913 when the Italians realised you could move the camera while a scene was being shot – and in doing so invented the zoom. There's the whole area of cinematography – cutting, panning, zooming and so on – yet to be properly exploited in games for a start, and then who knows what beyond that?

Imagine – it was 30 years in movies before anyone invented the zoom! This medium we're working in is a lot younger than that, and there's an awful lot still to be thought of. My feeling is that it'll be quite a while yet before computer games really come into their own, and it won't really start to happen until we're using CD properly. All Lucasfilm's future games are being developed with CD in mind, because that's how we see the future – it's only through CD that we'll ever, say, be able to eliminate some of the text on screen and rely more on the spoken voice.

What sort of games are you guys working on at the moment?

One project we've got is *Young Indiana Jones*, which we're designing for CD from the word go. It's based on a new TV show George Lucas is doing, and we've got the actors from the show to do the voices. Generally we're taking full advantage of the things CD does well – stuff like music, sound effects and, of course, great graphics. Luckily we've got access to the sound effects library at Lucasfilm just down the road where they do movie post production – we sneak in there after they've gone home and use all their equipment!

What's the main difference between having text on screen and spoken voices?

Well, text on screen has no inherent emotion. With spoken voices and using a dialogue interface you can have a character respond not just in different words – as you could if you were just using text – but in different tones of voice too. We took 12 actors into a studio to record the speech for the new CDTV version of *Loom*, and it was a real eye opening experience for both them and us. I think they expected it to be much like a radio drama, but of course in a game you don't get two voices interacting as such – the actors found they had to say everything as a little stand-alone bit of speech, yet still try and get emotion and character into it. The experience got us thinking about ways in which we could make the whole thing work even better – it's an interesting new art form we're trying to invent here.

Isn't all this speech stuff going to cause problems when you try and sell Lucasfilm games abroad?

We actually sell more in the UK and Europe than we do in the States, and I think there are a couple of reasons for that. One is simply that there are more people in Europe – it's a bigger market – but the fact that we actually bother to properly translate our games into all the European languages has a lot to do with it too. Of course things are going to get more complicated as speech becomes more important to our games – we'll have to get a new set of actors for France say, and another lot for Germany. Either that, or one very versatile French actor! But that's definitely the way things are starting to go.

You've got a film maker called Hal Barwood working with you now. What sort of useful skills has he brought along with him?

Hal's a guy who's been in the movies for years – he wrote and produced things like *Sugerland Express*, *Dragonslayer* and *Close Encounters*. He's brought with him lots of ideas about how to build and develop character and what makes a story interesting to the computer medium – things I don't think have really been explored in this business before. A lot of it's based on the idea of there being seven basic stories which goes back to Aristotle and applies to every medium, but equally many of his ideas have specifically come out of the film industry.

For instance, in film, if you're shooting a battle scene, no matter what you do you always try to keep one army on one side of the screen and the other on the opposite side. It's to give the audience visual clues as to what's going on. This sort of visual continuity has been rather ignored in computer games up until now. We're actually finding this film link useful in a number of ways – there are a lot of film schools based in California where we are and we're thinking of working with some of the students to see what interesting things they can come up with. The feeling is that a lot of them may actually find they prefer working in this medium to working in the movies!

Is there anyone else you think is doing interesting work in this field?

→

LUCASFILM: THE NEXT THREE

The next set of Lucasfilm adventures promise to be of even greater jaw-dropping excellence than anything we've seen before. Man-in-the-know Doug Glen explains all...

The Secret Of Monkey Island II: LeChuck's Revenge

***'More cartoony' has been the way to go for The Secret Of Monkey Island 2* (PC version shown).**

"The title says it all really. We've developed LeChuck into this real Freddy from *Nightmare On Elm Street* character – he's just utterly evil, and he's real mad at Guybrush! Much of the game has to do with Guybrush building up mystical powers strong enough to compete with those of LeChuck, which he does in a number of ways. At one point he has to get himself a voodoo doll to use, for instance.

"We've refined the interface for this game some more too, making it smoother to use – verbs now light up as the mouse pointer passes over them, making selecting them neater. The visual look of the game has been developed too – it's slightly more cartoony, all done with marker pens and then scanned in 32 colours into the Amiga. Basically all the restraint we showed in the first *Monkey Island* has been eliminated, ha ha! There are some real Warner Bros cartoon effects in there now!"

Young Indiana Jones Chronicles

"The TV show this is based on is scheduled to be shown in the UK around September 1992, I guess, coming out in the US in February. It consists of 15 one hour movies, showing Indy's life at ages nine and 17 as he follows his dad on lecture circuits around the world. Each week he'll meet a real historical figure and get involved in important events.

"In the first episode, for instance, he goes to England, studies languages at Oxford, then leaves for Egypt where he meets TE Lawrence (ie Lawrence Of Arabia), gets involved in the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb and so on. In later episodes he gets involved with the Mexican revolution, meets Picasso in Montematre, falls in love with Sophie Hapsburg, meets Freud and Jung, gets laid for the first time – by Mata Hari! – bumps into Roosevelt, goes to Japan and meets Hirohito and so on. It's certainly packed with events, which gives us a lot to go on for the game!"

Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis

This PC shot of *Indy* shows just how far Lucasfilm have avoided the cartoon look of *Monkey Island*.

"We're trying out a new music system for this one called iMUSE – it allows you to make music interact with gameplay in a game for the first time. In effect what happens is that the system intelligently scores the music and sound effects so they're in sync with your actions – if you enter a dark tunnel, say, the music will become much more sombre and scary, whereas if you'd taken another door and gone outside it'd become all light and airy. It's almost as if you've got a conductor and orchestra there playing the music in a different way each time you play – it really helps add to the atmosphere.

"The other big thing to notice is how different the graphics are to those in *Monkey Island 2*. We've developed a much more 'realistic', cinematic look which seems more appropriate to the character, story and mood of the more serious *Indy* games. It's generally a lot less cartoony".

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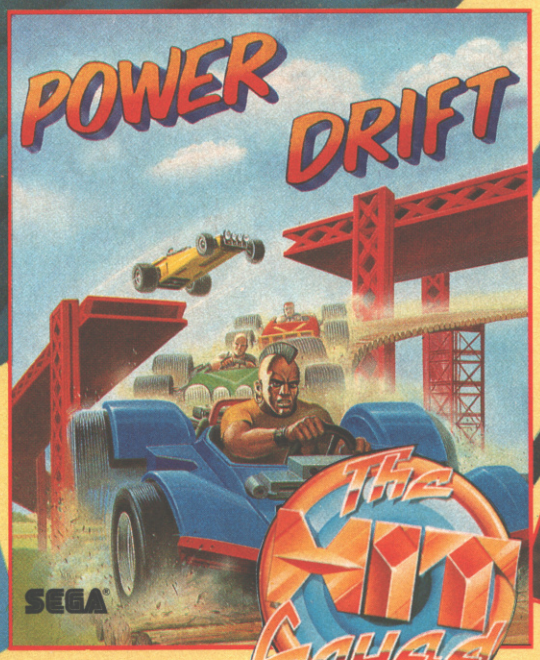

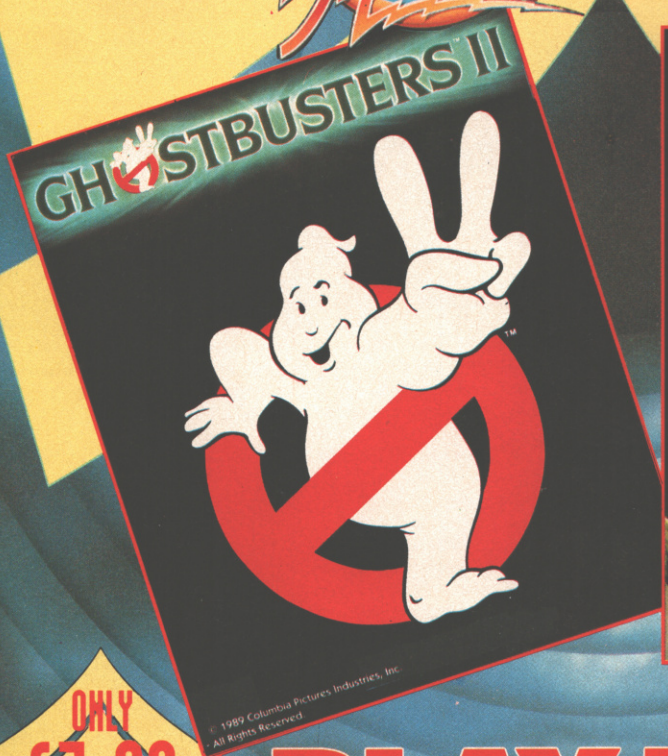

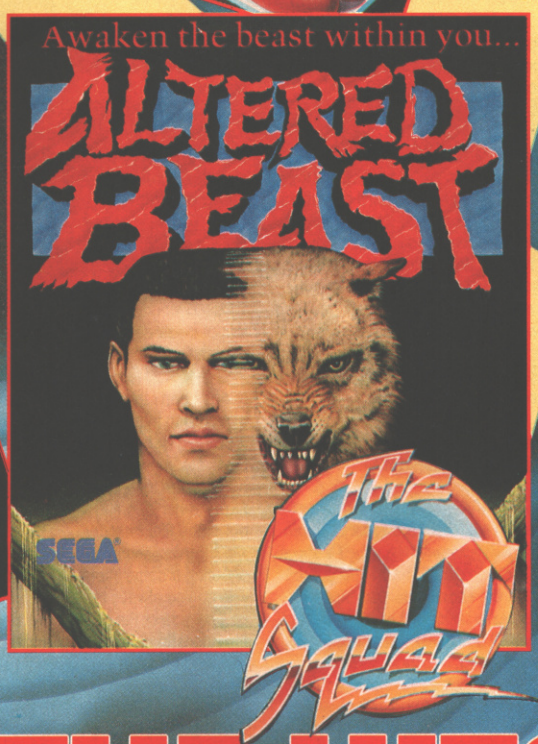

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A selection of Lucasfilm leading lights in a hotel room on a recent visit to London. From left to right: Cynthia Wuthmann (Director Of Sales), Jack Sorensen (Director Of Business), Lisa Star (International Coordinator), Doug Glen, Lucy Bradshaw (Director Of Development), Edward Kilham (Project Leader), Howard Philips (Creative Director) and (phew!) Kelly Flock (Director Of Marketing). And that's all folks!

Of course. In the adventure game market it tends to be us, Delphine and Sierra, while MicroProse and Dynamix are the big names in the simulation field. We're all doing interesting stuff at the moment, but I think it's whoever first manages to make CD-based games really work for a wide public that'll turn out to be the real winner.

Hal Barwood

Film-maker Hal Barwood recently got heavily involved in Lucasfilm and currently works as Project Leader on a number of games. Here he tell us about some of the things he's working on, and shows where parallels between the film and game industry's can be drawn.

How did you get involved in the game world in the first place?

I was into designing games for my own amusement for a lot of the period I worked in film, but the technology hadn't advanced to such a stage where they had became an interesting proposition to work in. Now, though, it's a medium that asks to be taken seriously.

Games have a lot of the same problems as the movies – it's all to do with story telling, visual design and so on – but they have differences too, chief amongst them being that you don't just sit back and watch a game, you actually participate in it. You are, if you like, driving the story forward yourself, rather than sitting back and waiting for it to happen to you.

Hal Barwood: "What we're doing here is a drama that unfolds in a series of puzzles."

Do you think games are going to get more like the movies?

I think more important than any visual changes and improvements we make to games is how speech will emerge as a very important part of any game. It's going to mean a lot of changes of course. →

THE GAMES OF LUCASFILM... THE GAMES OF LUCASFILM... THE GAMES

Though they had some interesting C64 games (*The Eidolon*, *Rescue On Fractalus*), Lucasfilm really got into their stride with their PC and 16-bit stuff. Matt Bielby casts a critical eye over their back catalogue, including no less than four AMIGA POWER All-time Top 100 games..!

Maniac Mansion (1987)

A typical tale of American teens, a mysterious meteor, and of course, a *Maniac Mansion*. The early Lucasfilm adventures were good, but in retrospect barely hinted at the sophistication of what was to come.

The first Lucasfilm game in the style later refined for *Zak McKraken* and the *Indiana Jones* adventure, *Maniac Mansion* puts you in charge of a bunch of friends who just happen to be hanging around close to a spooky old house when a meteor lands nearby. You control a number of the pals as you try and recover the meteor and report it to the 'meteor police' (whoever they are) – as well as rescue your kidnapped cheerleader chum Sandy – while the strange people who live in the mansion do their best to stop you. It's fun, and has some of the atmosphere of, say, *The Rocky Horror Show*, but the graphics look a bit primitive and stick-like today, and the parser, while useable, has since been improved almost beyond recognition.

***

Zak McKraken And The Alien Mindbenders (1989)

An improvement on *Maniac Mansion*, but very much along similar lines, *Zak* has a very simple plot – odd looking aliens (they have great big long heads with the mouths down at the bottom and eyes right at the top, hence their habit of disguising themselves with false Groucho Marx masks) are trying to take over the world and it's up to sleaze-rag reporter Zak to stop them. The plan was to build a machine to make earth people stupid so the alien invasion would go without a hitch – it worked so well that the alien operating it would sometimes stand too close and start doing the oddest things. Two headed squirrels, goldfish bowls used as space helmets and so on show typical Lucas humour at work. A fairly rigid plot, blocky graphics and a less advanced parser date it now, but it's still great fun to play.

***

Battlehawks 1942 (1989)

The first Lucasfilm flight sim, and an excellent one for its time. Set in the Pacific theatre of war it allowed you to fly missions in a selection of both American and Japanese planes, and generally took the more accessible shoot-'em-uppy route to flight sims rather than bog you down in technical details. It could, perhaps, have done with giving you still more different things to do – some extra missions wouldn't have gone amiss – but it's great fun all the same. It's notable as one of the earliest games to give you an action replay option, allowing you to watch your kills again from a selection of angles and distances.

***

Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade – The Graphic Adventure (1989)

Just excellent, really, and about as good as this sort of game gets (or has currently got, anyway – some of

***Indy* was the first of Lucasfilm's more advanced adventures, with better plot, graphics and parser.**

Lucasfilm's upcoming projects look set to outstrip it in just about every way possible). Following closely on the plot of the movie (but not so close that you can second guess every move), it's packed with nicely paced puzzles (it never gets off-puttingly hard), pleasing graphics and a great sense of atmosphere. Some of the sillier humour from its natural predecessors – *Zak* etc – has been ditched in favour of a more straight approach and the whole thing simply hangs together very impressively indeed. A lovely parser and some neat packaging – the box is brimming with bits and pieces you have to use with the game – add a real feeling of completeness to it too. Excellent.

*****

Their Finest Hour: The Battle Of Britain (1989)

Another top notch flight sim, this time set in the skies over Europe. Lots of options – as well as flying Spitfires and other fighters, you could pilot an attacking Junkers bomber if you wanted, swapping between the various positions as you saw fit (though this could cause problems – spend too long shooting at attacking Spits from the rear gunner's position and, on returning to the cockpit, you could find yourself flying three feet off the ground and →

For one thing, we're going to have to put up with actors and their little quirks, but it also means we're going to have to come up with more intense visuals to match the increase in emotional content the actors will bring to our stories.

I think the old silver platter (CD) is the key – they're so much more accessible than computer disks to the average person, and will help bring computer games to the mass market.

How do you see your role in computer games?

My role is that of a writer – that's how I see myself. It helps to know how to cope with a story, which is something the movies have taught me, but it also helps that you understand games. What we're doing here is a drama that unfolds in the form of a series of puzzles.

Just how did you come up with the idea for the *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis* game?

Well, *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* was always intended to be the last of the movies – the title sort of tells you that – but Indy had become too popular a character to allow to simply die. Doing a new game around him seemed like a natural way to keep the character alive.

The problem was coming up with a big enough story to hold him. We knew he'd already been involved with the Holy Grail and the Arc Of The Covenant, and we needed something of a similar stature – Atlantis was one idea that fitted the bill.

However, we were initially wary of it because George Lucas had established as a criteria for the character that Indy never becomes involved with fantasy-type things – he only finds things that have, or at least could have, existed – and we wanted to stick with that. Having said that, Atlantis is mentioned as far back as Plato and beyond, and seemed like something that could easily have at least some basis in truth.

Besides, Steven Spielberg was keen to push for a more fantastic, sci-fi approach, and Atlantis worked in that context too, because we could give everything a slightly odd, alien feeling. ●

LUCASFILM: THINGS TO COME

Loom CDTV (released through Commodore), *Zak McKraken* CDTV (released through Commodore), *The Secret Of Monkey Island* CDTV (released through Commodore), *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* CDTV (released through Commodore), *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis*, *The Secret Of Monkey Island 2*

CDTV will play a major part in the future of Lucasfilm (which could prove to be a big reason for buying one!)

F LUCASFILM... THE GAMES OF LUCASFILM... THE GAMES OF LUCASFIL

straight into the side of a house!). Taking the role of the Air Vice Marshal (or whoever) allowed you to play it as a strategy game too.

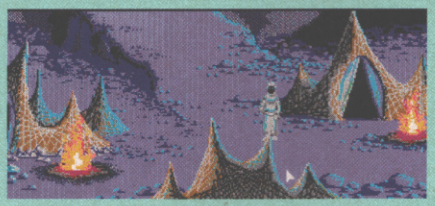
Great fun then, and massively atmospheric, but the 3D (a strange mix of bitmapped planes and vectors) was terribly slow and juddery by current standards. The upcoming *Their Finest Missions* disk (reviewed this issue) adds to the appeal, though unfortunately the follow up (*Secret Weapons Of The Luftwaffe*) has now been deemed too big and complicated for conversion to the Amiga.

****

***Their Finest Hour* was one of the earliest flight games to ignore technical virtuosity in the name of gameplay.**

Loom (1990)

It has its problems (too small and easy, basically) but this is a game that everybody loves. The first obvious forerunner to *Monkey Island*, it has some very similar humour in it, though with a much more... well, rustic slant. You play Bobbin, a trainee weaver from the Guild Of Weavers where they work on a large (and very special) loom on which they 'weave the very fabric of reality itself' (or something). The loom's being attacked by demons, all the other weavers (including young Bobbin's mum) have turned into geese and flown away and it's left up to Bobbin to



***Loom* saw Lucasfilm veering into comic fantasy, and though rather too easy, it's still a very fine game.**

a) find his mum and b) rescue the loom. Much of the game is based on Bobbin learning a series of rather crap magic spells (which appear in the form of short tunes) and then finding ways in which to use them to his advantage – at one point he has to save a bunch of sheep from a sheep-eating dragon, for instance, which he does by painting them green. Why? So the dragon can't seem them camouflaged against the grass, of course!

Magical and rather lovely, it's a game well worth playing again, especially in the new, updated CDTV version – complete with real actors supplying all the voices to great effect! – which will be released through Commodore soon.

*****

Nightshift (1991)

A real oddball for Lucasfilm, *Nightshift* is a) a platform game (sort of), not a sophisticated flight sim or graphic adventure and b) created in this country by developers Attention To Detail (currently working on the new *Indy* action game) rather than in house at Lucasfilm in the States. That said though, it's very Lucasfilm in style and feel – packed with Lucas movie references and odd quirky bits of humour.

The basic idea is that you control a couple working the nightshift (hence the name) on a giant toy-making machine called The Beast. The machine's pumping out *Indy* and *Star Wars* action figures by the dozen, but things keep going wrong (from bits breaking to mischievous lemmings – yes, lemmings – deliberately sabotaging your model lines!) and you – of course – have to run about fixing it all. It's tough and likable – Lucasfilm initially saw it as a sequel to *Pipe Dreams* (the version of *Pipe Mania* they did in the States) but it quickly established a strong identity of its own.

****

Developed in Britain, *Nightshift* represents a complete departure for Lucasfilm into the realm of platforms.

The Secret Of Monkey Island (1991)

The best yet, and clear proof that Lucasfilm know exactly where they're going and are improving with each successive game. A clear successor to *Loom* and co, it takes the humorous, more cartoony and playful approach to adventures and refines it. Biggest triumph is perhaps in the creation of real, interesting and non-clichéd characters to populate the game, but the immensely useable control system, twisty-turny plot and wonderfully apt graphics can hardly be ignored either. It's a game to make you genuinely laugh out loud too. Improving on *Loom* vastly in the lastability stakes, it's perhaps getting tedious how often we praise the game, but – hey! – *Monkey Island* deserves it. There's more wit and intelligence at play here than in any comparable game – guaranteed! ●

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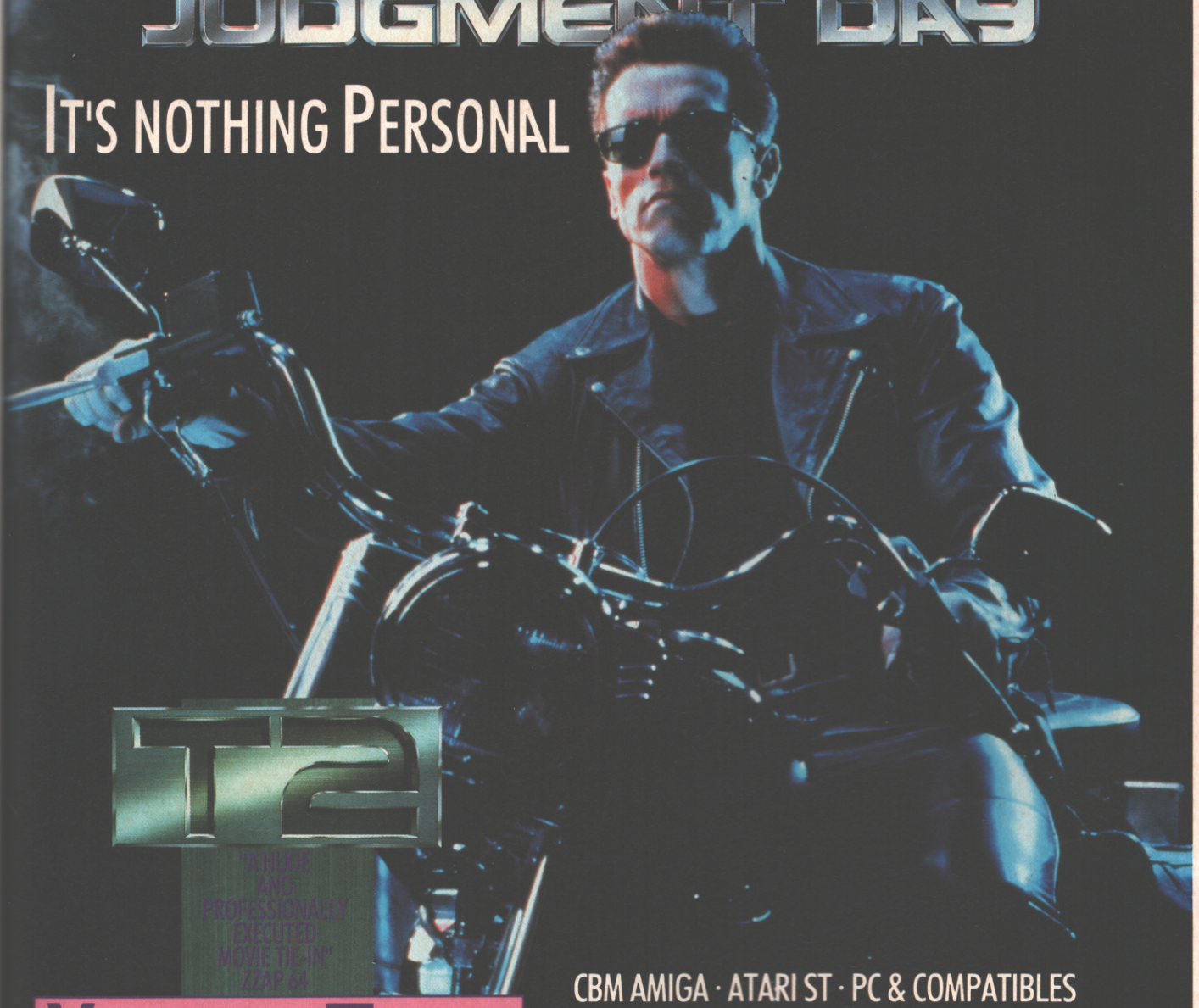

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IF I'D KNOWN THEN...

BOB JACOB used to be the Big Man at Cinemaware, one of the most innovative American publishers working on the Amiga – until Cinemaware went bust. Luckily for UK fans though, that wasn't the end – UK publishers Mirrorsoft bought the name 'Cinemaware' while Jacob's outfit resurfaced as Acme Interactive, producing new titles for the Cinemaware label.

For a while it was rumoured that Acme would no longer support the Amiga, instead concentrating on the PC leisure market, but happily it's turned out to be just that, a rumour. Indeed, the first of the new Cinemaware products are just starting to come through: ideal timing, then, to ask Bob Jacob how he would have handled things differently if he'd known then what he knows now...

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

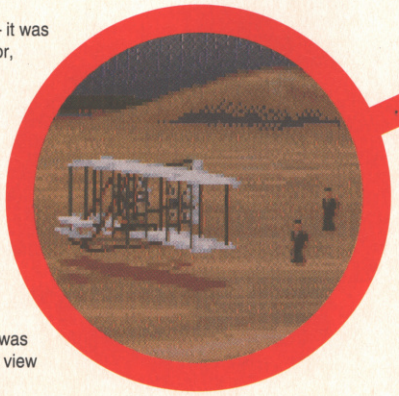
Defender Of The Crown was the first Cinemaware title to ship. We'd got our funding in early '86 and I was managing all these projects, going crazy, and the first developer we used to do *Defender* failed miserably. So I went out and talked to RJ Michael, the guy who wrote *Intuition* for the Amiga and also *Sinistar*. I said "RJ, I'm going to pay you more money than you've ever seen in your life if you can deliver this game by October". And so for the next nine weeks he went absolutely nuts and programmed the Amiga version of *Defender*. If anyone ever complains about the gameplay in the Amiga version of *Defender* I would say, "Hey, y'know, what can I say?" I think that the later versions are better – they addressed the deficiencies.

Defender Of The Crown is one of the seminal products in computing gaming. Our inspiration for the project simply was that we wanted to do a game like *Risk* and replace the dice rolling with arcade sequences. The success or failure in the sequences would effect what happened on the game board. We combined this with the idea of knights in shining armour and had one of the best selling games of all time. Of course, if I'd known then what I know now I'd have hired a different programmer right from the start. But there's nothing else I'd change. I'm very happy with the concept of the game.

IT CAME FROM THE DESERT

With *It* we originally were going to have ten scenarios and ended up having one and a second one as an add-on disk. *It Came From The Desert* was a real interesting experience for us. The game was actually a lot more complicated internally than it needed to be. One of the revolutionary things about this game is the fact that we have all these locations in the game and things are happening simultaneously in real time. If you are not in a certain location at a certain time, and things are happening, you won't even get to meet certain characters.

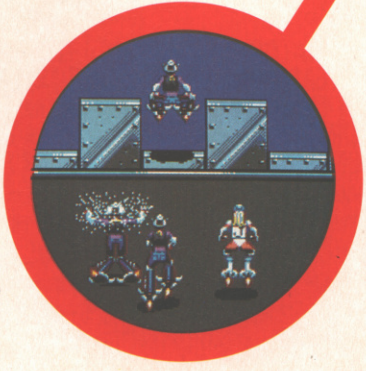
WINGS



Wings was definitely one of our successes – in terms of sales certainly. We didn't think of it as an interactive movie concept – it was never sold as such. It was billed as a personal combat simulator, which in essence it was. It was the idea of building some emotional link between you and your on-screen counterpart. It was basically designed around the idea that there's gotta be a market for people who like the idea of flight simulators but don't really like flight simulators. We were trying to establish if there was a niche out there for people like that – like ourselves, basically – and the really strong sales of *Wings* would indicate that there is. We are working on another product in a similar vein at the moment, but I can't say what.

It's interesting if you look at *Wings*: at its most basic level it's an arcade game – you just fly and shoot. We needed it to be more than that though – we needed a storyline, we needed a role playing element. It was very easy to play, which was the whole idea from the beginning. From a pure design point of view was one of our most successful titles. I love that product.

TV SPORTS



The transition to sports titles was a result of two things. Sports titles are a more knowable commodity than other types of games. For example, in a baseball game there are three outs per innings – the universe is knowable. You have to fulfil the needs of that universe, yes, but at least you know exactly what they are. To be really frank about it, we felt that most sports games out there were not very good in various ways, and we were cocky enough to believe that we could beat them relatively easily. We started a very successful franchise with *TV Sports* which we're determined to continue.

Rollerbabes is, I believe, a *TV Sport*. It shares some of the common elements with the *TV Sports* titles in terms of interface. Once you're doing things like football and basketball and other major sports out there, sometimes the idea occurs to you to do a fantasy sport. There are things you can do with a fantasy sport which allow greater creative enthusiasm because you're going have to define your own rules and you aren't limited to physical reality. You can let your imagination run away with you.

ROCKET RANGER

I felt it was just a spot-on blend of strategy and role playing and arcade stuff, putting a lot of pressure on the player. It was a really compelling experience. At the end of *Rocket Ranger* it says to be continued, so I won't comment on the possibility of sequel, but I already have the ideas for one worked out. It's just a matter of putting the creative machinery to work. The big debate is what is our best title – some people say *It Came From The Desert* and some people say *Rocket Ranger* and some people actually think *Defender* was. *Rocket Ranger* is mine – and it's not just because I wrote it. In fact there's a movie script based on *Rocket Ranger*, and we've sold a pinball game to Gottlieb. There's a bit of a *Rocket Ranger* cult out there, and it would be foolish to let the character die. For instance, there's a *Rocket Ranger* comic book coming out. It's a six issue mini-series, and the first issue out this month. I've seen it, and it's great. The Rocketeer of the comics and the new movie is visually beautiful stuff, but I've always thought *Rocket Ranger* is a better story. It wasn't based on The Rocketeer. Actually, The Rocketeer and *Rocket Ranger* both have the same common ancestor – Commando Cody, who was the hero of several Republic Pictures series back in the Forties.

LORDS OF THE RISING SUN

Lords Of The Rising Sun is very much like *Defender Of The Crown* only in the sense that World War II is a rehash of World War I. Yeah, it's a game of territorial conquest with arcade sequences, but I think it's a much deeper design – maybe too deep in some ways. *Defender* was obviously an "I take my turn, you take your turn" kind of thing. In *Lords* it's all real-time action, and the arcade sequences are stronger. We should have had a practice mode for some of the arcade games – they come up so infrequently that you have to lose because haven't had a chance to practice them. The pace of the game was too slow, I think.

It was one of those games where people would spend twelve hours getting involved in this game. That's great if you've got twelve hours but if you've only got an hour, not so great. You have to understand something – I am my biggest critic. I've never written anything I was happy with. I can always look at one of our projects and say "Oh God, why didn't we do this, why didn't we do that?" Everything could be improved just that bit more.

***TV Sports Baseball*: "always big news in Europe" apparently**

THE FUTURE

We're going to be doing a lot of cartridge stuff, CD-ROM stuff, and we will also continue to support the personal computer stuff – the PC and Amiga. One of the challenging things about this industry is that you always have to keep one foot in the present but you also have to maintain one foot in the future. CD-ROM, for example, is a marketplace which is not viable right now. But it is tomorrow. There's no question about it. There's the low cost of the media, the quality of the experience which makes it ultimately the platform. Which CD-ROM systems will emerge is problematical. There's obviously many possibilities ranging all the way from Nintendo and Sega with their systems to CD-I or CDTV or whatever. We will be there. I've been in this business now for a while and I have no intention of getting out of it – I love it too much.

***TV Sports Boxing*: more FRP than other sports sims**

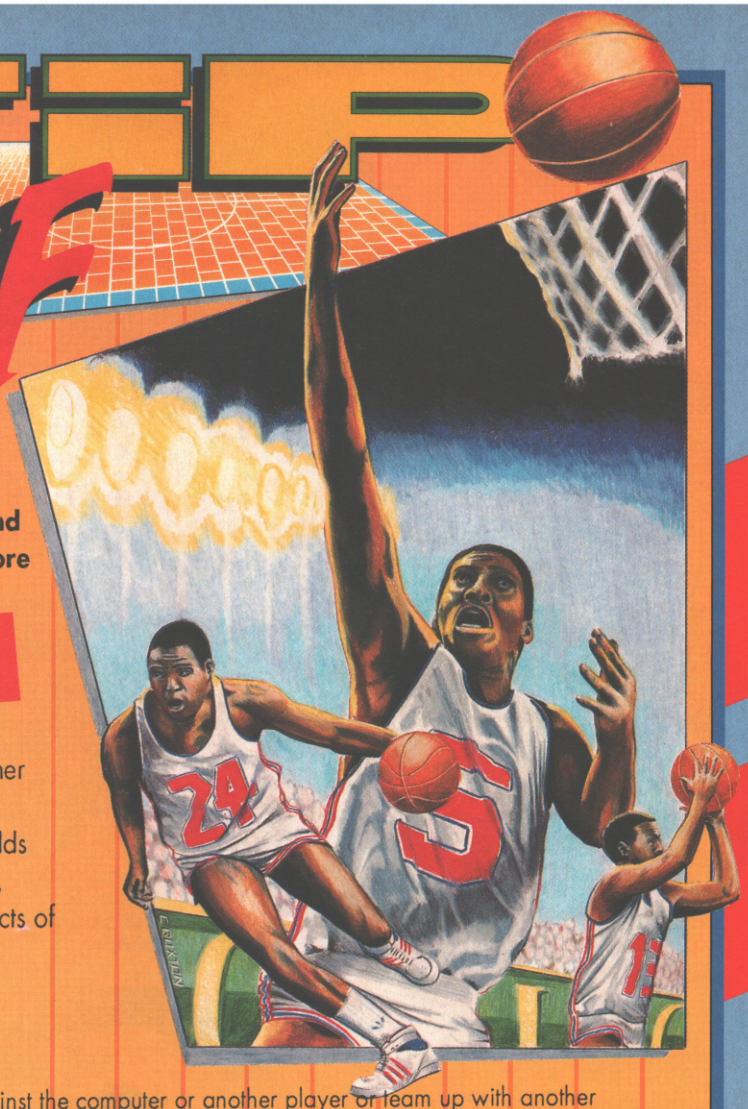
TV SPORTS: BOXING

We're currently working on *TV Sports: Boxing*, and it's pretty hot stuff. It has the best role playing experience of any sports simulation. We've borrowed a lot of elements from a straight FRP. It's the idea of creating your own guy: you are a boxer, you have a career, you hire managers, you fire managers, you have trainers, you buy equipment, you work your way up through the rankings, your skills improve, the other guys are winning, losing, moving up, moving down. It's a very dynamic experience. The arcade game's great, and the graphics are real hot stuff too.

TV SPORTS: BASEBALL

We're currently working on *TV Sports: Football II* and *TV Sports: Basketball II*, and we've got a baseball game, too. Baseball games are always a hit in Europe, y'know? *Hardball* on the Commodore 64 was a big hit for US Gold and Accolade in Europe. We have, particularly on the Amiga side, the only real arcade game baseball that's ever been done on the Amiga. There's no competition. None.

TIP OFF



The sheer pace of the game, end to end action and tactical game play is the core of TIP OFF, a basketball simulation -

A SIMULATION WHICH IS GREAT FUN TO PLAY

Players' skills, attributes and fitness together with the astute substitution of players and change of tactics banks by the coach, holds the key to success in basket ball. TIP OFF, therefore includes some managerial aspects of the game. The main features are:-

* Multi directional scrolling screen
* Five skill levels. Skill level of both teams can be set independently.
* 1 to 4 players option. Option to play against the computer or another player or team up with another player against the computer or another player or two players.
* Facility to practice skills and tactics.
* Facility to create a team at all skill levels and design tactics.
* Instinctive Joystick controls to dribble, pass, shoot or do a dummy. There are two running speeds, two types of dribbling and passing and five types of shots at the basket (Jump shot, Hook shot, Skyhook, Running Jump shot and Slam Dunk).
* Each player on the court is an individual with a unique mixture of attributes (Age, Height, Flair, Pace, Stamina and Composure) and skills (Passing, Dribbling, Stealing, Shooting and Jumping).
* Two types of Leagues. Action Replay at 3 speeds.
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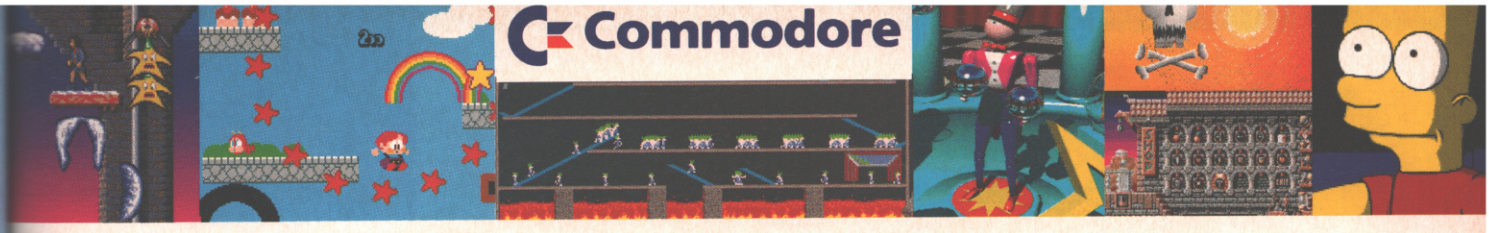

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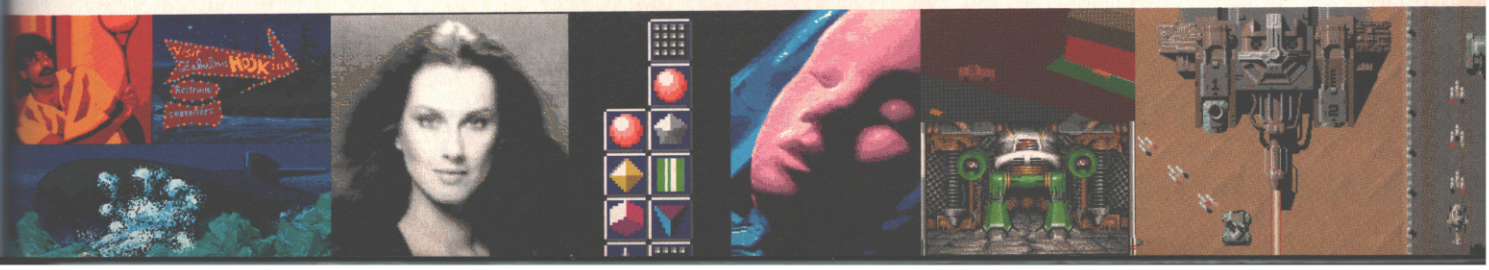

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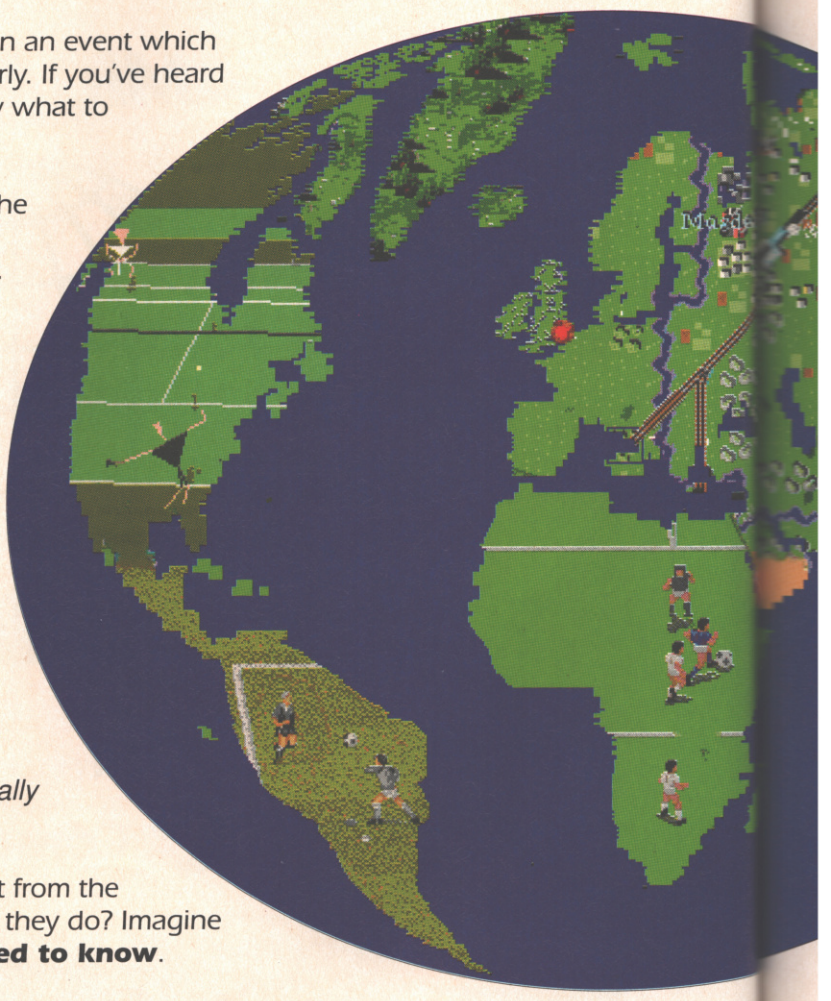

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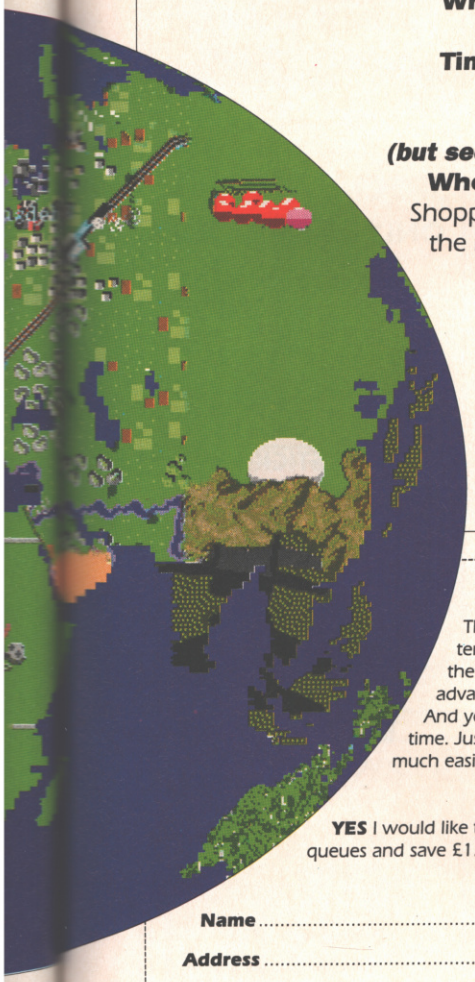

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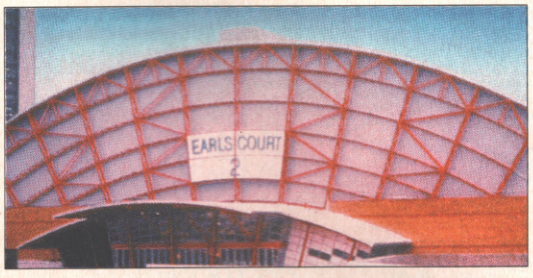

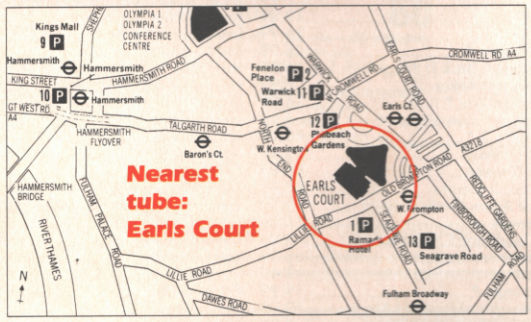

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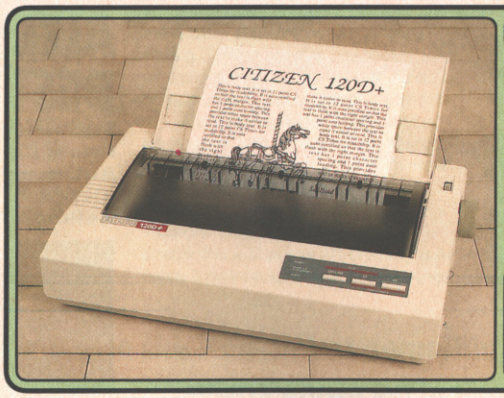

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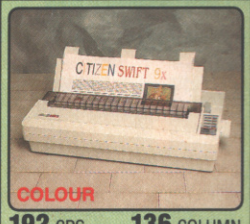

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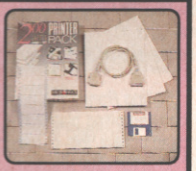

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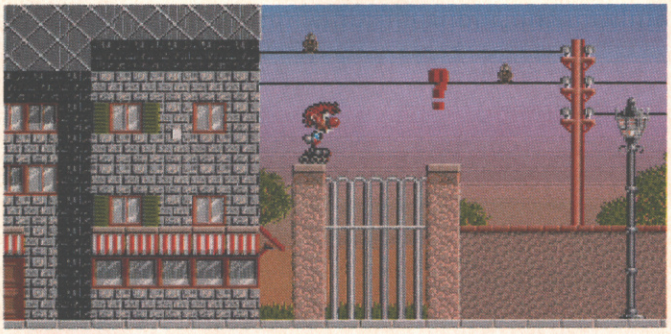
GAMES REVIEWS CONTINUED

Welcome to the second part of the AMIGA POWER reviews section, where we review a) the lesser full-price releases, b) budget games, c) compilations and last (but not least) d) PD games...



Get your skates on Ronny! Sub-standard scrolling platform 'fun' in *Rolling Ronny*.

ROLLING RONNY

Publisher: Virgin
Price: £25.99
Authors: Rene Straub and Orlando
Release: Out now

Rolling Ronny is a bright and cartoony scrolling platformer, with tons of things to collect, lots of mini games bunged in for your amusement, and a smattering of 'look before you leap' sub-plots for added depth. Quite clearly these elements are supposed to gel together and form a lighthearted romp in the style of, say, *The Blues Brothers* (also reviewed this issue) or *The Simpsons*. Let's see if they do...

To start with, there's no doubt that there's plenty to do in this game. *Ronny* not only has to skate along and collect floating boxes of jewellery on behalf of Scotland Yard, he also has to collect money with which to buy weapons, avoid sundry bad guys, and run errands for various characters within the game in order to amass ever larger sums of money (which prove essential for your progress).

The whole thing's a pretty enough affair (if slightly characterless in some hard-to-put-your-finger-on way), and comes with its fair share of suitably juvenile humourous touches, but while it's all busy and colourful enough on the surface, in truth it's not all that much fun. Scratch the surface of this overly-elaborate platformer and you're left with a basic game of stunning mediocrity.

The mark of a successful arcade game is that you feel compelled to play it 'just one more time' but ploughing through this is more chore than entertainment. Whenever I made progress (which really isn't all that difficult or challenging) it had a very 'so what?' feel to it – there simply weren't enough surprises around the corner to make it worthwhile carrying on. You get the feeling that Virgin have lavished too many trinkets on *Rolling Ronny* in an attempt to make a plain game look more sophisticated than it really is, and I'm afraid it simply doesn't work. Not a terrible game, just an average one, but if you're looking for simple action-packed fun there are plenty of other options available. Try *Robocod*, those *Blues Brothers*, or *Mega Twins* or...

● *COLIN CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Hollow platformer with some neat twists, but not enough of them to make it all that much fun. Very very average.

50 PERCENT

ALTERED DESTINY

Publisher: Accolade
Price: £29.99
Authors: Michael Berlyn (Designer)
Release: Out now

Unreal worlds and surreal people await in the *Altered Destiny* graphic adventure.

It strikes me as rather odd that, given the length of time these American/French animated graphic adventure thingies have been around, and the considerable number which have been produced, no-one has managed to come up with a snappy title to neatly encapsulate the genre. We've got scrolling shoot-'em-ups, driving games, puzzle games, flight sims, cute games... but no pigeon hole for these devils. Don't worry, though – I'm not about to try and find one.

With another hopelessly forced intro out of the way, let's take a look at the game. As usual you play an ordinary sort of bloke, minding his own business, who gets unwillingly dragged into an alien world and has to solve a quest to get back out again. The bloke is called P.J. Barrett, the world is called Daltere – and is depicted by a huge quantity of slightly amateurish but nonetheless attractive graphics – and the quest involves finding a jewel and defeating a baddy. And above all the whole game is weird. Very weird.

I've never actually played any of the *Leisure Suit Larry* games (heaven forbid), but I believe *Altered Destiny*'s control system is similar to theirs – movement of your character is achieved by clicking on where you want him to go, while any other actions (such as picking things up) have to be routed through a parser, which means flexing your fingers and typing things like GET PENCIL. Luckily the parser, while very crude, manages to cover most eventualities, so you shouldn't have to spend too much time struggling with its vocabulary. The only real problem comes when you see an unidentified blob on the ground and can't examine it until you've worked out what to call it, and can't work out what to call it until you've examined it. If there's a simple way of finding out what something's called without going mad in the process I've yet to find it.

More likely to be a source of hassle are the interminable pauses between things happening, as often as not accompanied by disk accesses and swaps. (The game comes on six disks.) I can't imagine a hard drive would ease the situation much, either, as most of the time seems to be spent decrunching rather than reading data. You eventually get used to the game's very laid back pace, though.

Interestingly, Accolade have taken the dubious step of including in the package a clue book, containg complete solutions to the whole thing in varying degrees of crypticity. This is good news in some ways, as many of the puzzles are extremely obscure and you'd probably have ended up sending off for it anyway, but it immediately robs the game of much of its challenge and mystique. You'll just have to be disciplined enough to hide it under the bed until you reach the hair-loss stage, and then sneak it out and tentatively peek at the bit you need before snapping it shut and checking no-one saw you. (As a reviewer I was obviously allowed the privilege of unrestricted access, however).

I know I've been almost entirely critical of *Altered Destiny* so far, but it's actually not a bad game at all. A vast amount of manpower has obviously gone into it, and that shows in the game's huge scale and correspondingly long life expectancy. It's all very American, of course, but perfectly enjoyable if you're prepared to make the necessary allowances. ● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Nothing new – and if you'd showed it to me five years ago I'd have said much the same thing – but it's as absorbing as these big American graphical adventure quest games always are.

73 PERCENT

THEIR FINEST MISSIONS: VOLUME ONE

Publisher: US Gold
Price: £15.99
Authors: Lucasfilm
Release: Out now

Ready for take off. *The Missions Disk* is ideal for would-be WWII aces.

Their Finest Hour – remember it? Damn. Er, right. It's a Battle of Britain flight sim from Lucasfilm, dating from about the middle of last year, which was let down slightly by jerky graphics but redeemed itself almost entirely with some spectacular dogfighting scenes and perhaps the best manual for any game ever. It also excelled, as is the American way, in the 'attention to detail' stakes, recreating precisely all the main fighters and

bombers which participated in the aforementioned fray. If it's a WWII flying game you're after, there's none finer than this. Hurrah for Lucasfilm.

And now they've come up with this rather splendid add-on disk, containing 23 brand new missions (and a selection of pilots) which ought to satisfy even the most voracious thirst for action. They fall into all sorts of categories. Many are of the 'fighter escort' or 'go and bomb something' variety that cropped up rather frequently in the original game, while others pull out all the stops and place huge formations of lumbering He 111 bombers in your Spitfire's sights, or send you on daredevil solo missions into the heart of enemy territory. An example? Um, hang on. (Thumb, thumb...)

Right, here's one of my faves: as a Luftwaffe bomber pilot you've got to take your kite right into the heart of enemy territory, touch down on one of their airfields, strafe the line of Spits parked by the runway, stop for long enough for a waiting German agent to hop aboard, take off again and then go on to bomb a couple of radar stations before heading for home.

It's worth bearing in mind that you could easily, with a modicum of patience, have created all these yourself with *Their Finest Hour*'s built-in editor. And that's assuming you're worried about all this 'missions' malarkey in the first place – a sizable chunk of people are probably quite happy simply flying around blowing things up with the original game. And that's it really. If you're on the lookout for a *Finest Hour* mission disk, here it is. ● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE

A missions disk for *Their Finest Hour* (a really good game). There's not a lot else one can say about it really.

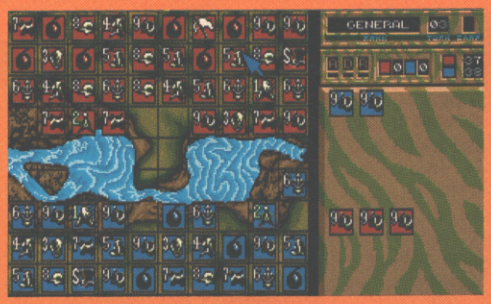
70 PERCENT

The classic board game finally makes it onto the Amiga, but something's gone wrong...

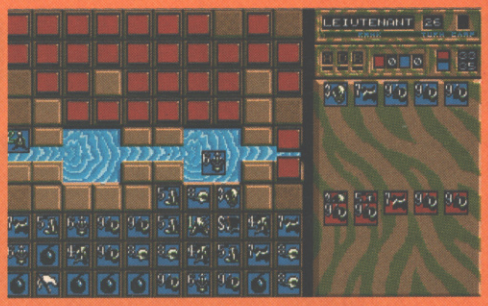
STRATEGO

Publisher: Accolade
Programmers: Imagitec Design
Price: £25.99
Availability: Out now

Stratego is to war what *Monopoly* is to Capitalism. There's no point having scruples in either, because they're both board games, and their raison d'etre is to encourage you to beat the pants off your opponent(s) in a contest that vaguely resembles some real life scenario, preferably of a deeply unpleasant nature.



Winning pieces is *not* actually the way to go about the game...



It all looks most confusing in 'authentic' mode...

...but you can simplify the background and pieces.

Stratego manages this superbly by being based on something very unpleasant indeed – the pieces representing splendidly pompous Captains, Generals, and other murderous players of a war in the Napoleonic era. Your pieces which are varied in importance (like in chess), have limited movement capabilities (like in chess) and are similarly assembled on one side of the board, while your opponent's (let's call him Bonaparte) are on the other. It's your job to overwhelm Boney's pieces, and capture his flag.

This would be straightforward enough, except that neither of you can see how the other has positioned his most valued pieces, his dispensable pieces, and other nasties such as landmines. Each piece has a number value (the lower the number, the more powerful the piece) that remains under-cover until they get into a scrap with an opposing soldier. If your General (marked an almost unbeatable One) wastes one of Boney's scouts (marked a pathetic Nine), you've destroyed one of his pieces, but hey – now he knows where your most valued player is hanging out. The trick is to sacrifice your wallies (scouts and such-like) while making full use of the big cheeses (Generals and Marshalls).

Thus there are plenty of opportunities for being devious, unscrupulous, calculating, vicious, cunning and generally malicious. I like this game a great deal because it offers all these delightful possibilities without being as drawn out, complicated, intense and plain boring as something like chess. It's just a quick, harmless fix of nastiness toward your fellow man.

Unfortunately, though, there are a couple of problems with this computer game version of it. It's all been programmed perfectly respectably, with loads of little options and trinkets to keep you amused, but the most important option has proved impossible to achieve: you can't play other human beings – only the blasted computer. There's a reason for this, of course – for two people to play on one machine would demand much closing of eyes and turning of backs whenever the other person has a turn (otherwise you'd be able to see the power of his pieces as they flip up on screen) which plain wouldn't work. I've tried playing like this on a computer version of *Battleships*, and I can assure you that cheating soon replaces strategy as the core of the game.

That limits it to being a one player game, and unfortunately *Stratego* just isn't one of those games which really works as a straight puzzler. The computer opponent is ruthless enough, but the whole thing is simply too cold for you to glean much satisfaction out of victory. I can't help feeling that the board game has just been trapped by its own design. But then Accolade should have realised this before they tried transfering it to a computer. ● *COLIN CAMPBELL*

So it's a great board game, but so what? It doesn't translate to a computer.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Stratego (as a board game) works brilliantly as a two-player game. Unfortunately, this version only lets you play the computer. And that's why it only gets...

52 PERCENT

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DEATH KNIGHTS OF KRYNN

Publisher: SSI (US Gold)
Author: SSI in house
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

Hell's bells, where's Mark when you need him? A freak shift in the Earth's magnetic field caused this game to be accidentally given to me for review, the world's all-time least knowledgeable *Dungeons & Dragons* expert. Pages and pages of manual blurb about 'Champions Of Krynn', 'A Dragonlance Epic, Vol. II', 'Knights Of Solamnia' and all sorts of other guff flew straight over my head as I attempted to bludgeon my way into this forbidding-looking game. (There's a serious point in here – it doesn't seem to have occurred to SSI that someone might buy this game without any prior knowledge of the series, and there isn't much here to help them work out what on earth's supposed to be going on. For those who *do* know what the game's all about though, documentation is pretty comprehensive and impressive.)

More standard *D&D* fare, with SSI's tired *Death Knights Of Krynn*.

Running up against a particularly unhelpful copy-protection system didn't improve matters any either, so it was with great trepidation that I eventually (one reload later) found myself starting the game. And boy, was I in for a surprise...

After the endless pages of info and instructions on character attributes, weapons, movements and spells, what I quite definitely wasn't expecting to discover in the end was a game remarkably similar in concept to a geriatric 8-bit classic by the name of *Chaos* (by *Laser Squad* author Julian Gollop). Now that's simplifying matters somewhat, but all through playing *Death Knights Of Krynn* I just couldn't shake the feeling of dejá vù. You can tell this is a serious D&D game though, because it's not as user-friendly, making you hack through several menus before you actually get to make a move. Not only that, but when you hit an enemy (or get hit by them) the message telling you the result of the attack flashes up for the briefest possible instant, making it impossible to know what's happened unless you put the game on its slowest setting. Difficulty is a bit on the high side as well – my party were slaughtered many times by the first band of baddies they met without there seeming to be much I could do about it at all.

You could argue there's not much point in my reviewing at all, and I'd tend to agree. *Dungeons & Dragons* aficionados will disregard any of my criticism as coming from a non-expert – which is fair enough, sort of – and non-fans aren't very likely to have this game high on their list of possible purchases anyway – unless this was a 90 percent game (and it's clearly not, even for D&D fans) they'd probably just look at the mark, see nothing to change their minds, and not bother reading any further. So really, I could pretty much say anything I like at this point and no-one would notice. I believe there are many inherent deficiencies in an over-centralised media system, baby. See?

Ahem. The fact of the matter is – and it pains me to say it, it really does – this is okay if you like That Kind Of Thing. The release of *Eye Of The Beholder* makes it redundant in every meaningful way, but that won't put off diehard fans, and neither could anything else I might say.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Unnecessarily fiddly control in a surprisingly simplistic game makes for a very average AD&D release. There isn't much here for the non-converted.

60 PERCENT

A puzzler which promises to put Amiga games back by a century!

BOSTON BOMB CLUB

Publisher: Silmarils (Palace Software)
Price: £25.99
Authors: Pascal Einssweiler and Michel Perrot (game), Fabrice Hauteiloque (music)
Release: Mid October

We've seen some fairly crappy little puzzle games masquerading as full price products from the French recently – *Quadrel* and *Swap* spring to mind amongst others – so it's nice to see one arrive that's actually rather good. For a start, *Boston Bomb Club* has that inventive, fun presentation that made games like *North And South* or *Shufflepuck Cafe* so much fun. Even more important than that though, the actual game itself is quite inventive and fun (if a little bit weird, as is the French way) instead of being simply crap – there's none of that dull matching-colours-to-make-them-disappear rubbish that has made many recent puzzlers so very so-what?-ish.

The situation is this – we're in Boston at the end of the last century, where a bunch of Victorian scientist chums in some sort of men's social club are experimenting with a giant, Babbage-style contraption based around a pool table. They've built a sort of maze-like assault course packed with trampolines, channels, cog-wheels and moveable gates – making it look like nothing so much as a rather posh version of MB Games' *Mousetrap* – into which they roll traditional style bombs. Your job is to manipulate the gates and so on in order to direct each bomb to the far side of the table and the safety of a bucket of water before they a) explode or b) two bombs collide with each other. Each successive (and increasingly complicated) version of the puzzle is seen from above, while the player – using a mouse-controlled cursor – tries to keep one step ahead of the bombs, planning a route that'll send each one in the direction you want it to go.

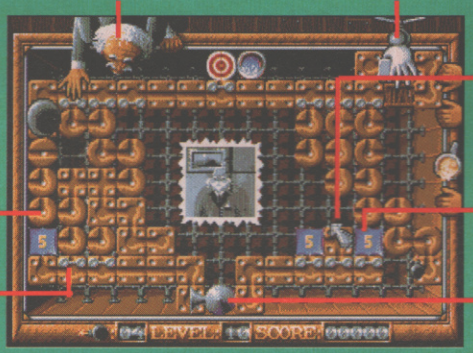
In many ways, then, this game isn't too dissimilar to Rainbow Art's recent *Logical* – except in that it's much more loveable. The wood-and-brass look of the graphics is more pleasing than the Bitmap-style metallica of the German game, the puzzles are often more inventive (and certainly less clinical) while the humour and character of the game shines through consistently. Mischievous scientists lean over the edge of the table and switch gates around to annoy you, bored passers-by start reading giant broadsheet newspapers over the table (thus blocking some of the play area from view), babies (!) crawl across the contraption, stealing your bombs and generally there's plenty going on around you to keep the interest level high. With only 30 screens (though the later ones are very hard) it perhaps won't be the longest lasting game ever, but you're bound to have bags of fun with it in the short term, that's for sure. ●

MATT BIELBY

Mean old guys with newspapers are just some of your worries in the *Bomb Club*.

DEFUSING THE SITUATION

Disposing of the eager-to-explode bombs isn't as easy as it looks. The beggars are pretty tricky to handle...



One of the mischievous mad Victorian scientists – he'll lean over the play area, changing gates round to annoy you.

Much more pleasant is this mechanical hand – it places extra point bonuses randomly about the place.

Your cursor arrow – click on gates or turntables to move them around.

Trampolines bounce you across (and sometimes off!) the pool-table sized play area.

Not an air-horn – this contraption is actually where your bombs kick off from!

Much manipulating of these turntable things needed to create a channel to send the bombs where you want them to go.

Some of the many moving gateways – click on them to set the course and so direct the bombs in the direction you want them to go.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Pleasing, fun and very French – a puzzle game that not only works as a game but proves to be a real hoot through the wit of its presentation. Neat.

78 PERCENT

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The *Hero Quest* saga continues, with more of that distinctive isometric 3D action.

HERO QUEST: RETURN OF THE WITCHLORD

Publisher: Gremlin
Price: £14.99
Authors: 221B
Release: Out now

I couldn't get quite as excited about *Hero Quest* as Stuart did (he gave it 80 percent in Issue Two), as it's pretty crummy as a one-player game, but there's no denying that when you lay into it with a couple of chums it's all very addictive indeed. In fact, as Stuart pointed out, you don't think you've been playing it long but suddenly the lawn's eighteen feet high, your kids have grown up and left home and the Conservatives are still in charge of the country. (Urm... oops).

Anyway, an expansion disk then, eh? While the original game had plenty of quests, which all stood up to repeated playing, they were pretty easy when it came down to it. At the end of it all you were left with a collection of heavily armed characters with some serious spending power and nowhere for them to play. Which is just the problem this expansion pack sets out to tackle – it's more of the same, but harder, and Gremlin suggest you don't try tackling it unless you've got some pretty mean characters saved from the first time round.

The quests aren't much of a departure from the first lot. They're just different room layouts with different objectives at the end. Don't expect any changes to the graphics or range of baddies, although I don't remember being stalked before by Death (who's invisible, and knocks off body points when he passes through you).

It's always tricky giving marks to expansion packs. This one isn't as radical as, say, the *Falcon* mission disks, but it's sensibly priced and is certain to prolong the life of the original game. So I'd better give it 80 percent as well, really.
● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
More of the same for *Hero Quest* fans. (Remember that you'll need the original game before you can play this.)
80 PERCENT

ZONE WARRIOR

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Price: £25.99
Authors: Imagitec Design
Release: Out now

It's spooky, isn't it, how every alien lifeform that comes into contact with the Earth decides to attack it? Things are a bit more complicated this time because the Geeks (the latest galactic empire to try their chances against you) have decided to sabotage human history by sending a Geek Commander to various important points in it, with the aim of eliminating the events that shaped us into the successful, peaceful and generally agreeable bunch that we are. So already we've got our 'levels' set out for us – five in all: Prehistoric, Egyptian, Medieval, Japanese and Future. On each one you've got to rescue some hostages, kill the Geek Commander and his chums, collect keys and pick up add-ons. All this slots into the inevitable bloke-walking-around-shooting-things framework, with a few refinements here and there. The bloke in question is fairly versatile – not only can he walk around and shoot things, but he can also crawl through tunnels and hang from the ceiling.

Uninspired by all this, but aware of my responsibilities as a reviewer, I dutifully played the thing through a few

Do do do do, do do do do... You have now entered the Mediocre Zone.

times and came to the following conclusions:
1) The graphics are okay, but not brilliant.
2) The sound effects and music are okay, but not brilliant.
3) It plays okay, but not brilliantly.
4) The ceiling could do with a new coat of paint.

There's nothing actually wrong with the game as such. It's just not particularly enthralling. 'Inconsequential' – that's the word. Under different circumstances – lower price, lesser computer, five years earlier – it might have made a slightly more audible splash, but I can't honestly recommend spending money on it. Not until it comes out on budget, anyway.
●*JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
An imaginative plot, an unimaginative design and some unimaginative programming. Even its creators must have been left with an empty feeling.
42 PERCENT

Ocean take a break from licences to invent football... with cars?

WILD WHEELS

It's all over. I won, but the next grade is still well out of reach. Time to get back behind the wheel I guess. (Sigh).

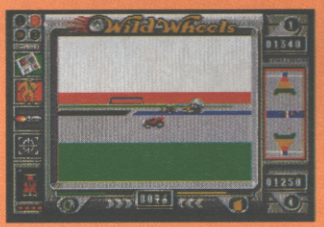
Publisher: Ocean
Price: £25.99
Authors: Red Rat
Release: Out now

Since just about everyone else has had a go at 3D second-person perspective sports games (most recently Millennium with the execrable *Stormball*), Ocean have decided they might as well try it, and they've come up with *Wild Wheels*, from the same programming team (Red Rat) who brought you MicroProse's *International Soccer Challenge*. The basic concept is six-a-side football played with cars, and apart from being able to buy power-ups and better vehicles with prize money, that's about all the game amounts to.

You zip around using any one of a number of viewpoints (a bit like a flight sim, you can watch from inside your car, slightly behind it, zoom around or even use the overhead view, which as it happens is pretty much the only one where you get a halfway-decent idea of what's happening and where everything is. Unfortunately, since the overhead view only occupies a little box at the side of the screen, the graphics are all absolutely tiny, so it's tricky to make everything out anyway) and, er, punt the ball in the general direction of the goal, while trying simultaneously to wreck the opposition's cars and prevent them doing the same to you.

The most interesting variation on the norm is that the goals themselves are deadly to the touch, so you need to be pretty sharp on the brakes if you score from close in (which is where you get the most points). While moving up the leagues, buying new vehicles and trying out new tactics will keep you amused for a couple of hours initially, in the longer term there's very little to actually do. It's simply not really fast and zappy enough to supply much entertainment while you're doing it either.

Almost there – all I need do is line it up properly to make that winning goal.



Get that ball! The goal is just about within reach, and victory could be mine!

While it's all perfectly well done and attractively presented (in what's fast becoming the standard TV show kind of set-up), *Wild Wheels* is let down by a basic game design that should have been too dull and shallow to have ever been allowed to get past the drawing-board stage. It's certainly better than *Stormball*, but then again that's a bit like saying Attilla The Hun was better than Hitler.

Mediocrity is an improvement on outright crapness, but it's still nothing to fork out hard-earned (or even not-very-hard-earned) money for. ● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
When you see the sort of stuff you can get from Ocean for £7.99 (things like *Head Over Heels*, say), *Wild Wheels* at £26 comes across as a bit of a joke.
52 PERCENT

BRAIN BLASTERS

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Author: Michel Ancel
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

***Brain Blasters* even has a two player mode (for twice the boredom).**

Why do I get all the puzzle games? This latest effort involves less mental dexterity and strategic thinking than most, and is in fact little more than a particularly nasty kind of memory tester. A pattern of various shapes appears on a 5x5 grid for 60 seconds, and you have to memorise it before it disappears. Random shapes then fall from the sky, and you and your opponent (computer or human) have to run around madly in a battle to grab the pieces and slot them into the correct positions on their respective grids. Various embellishments (training mode, placing bets on the outcome, assorted special blocks and so on) have been added in a rather desperate attempt to give proceedings a touch of added depth, but the basic nature of the gameplay is still extremely simple.

When you actually get down to playing, however, matters are complicated by the fact that many of the blocks are very similar in shape and colouring, and by the uncomfortable balance between ridiculously easy levels and stupidly complex ones that your average human being will get hopelessly lost in (especially in two-player mode – at least against the computer you can watch your opponent and copy him if you're stuck). When confronted with such a screen, my guess is that most people's reaction is likely to be 'Oh God, I just can't be bothered with this.' Making things horribly difficult is all very well, but if you don't also make them reasonably entertaining, there's no incentive for anyone to carry on torturing themselves for no reward. *Brain Blasters* more or less completely fails to provide any such entertainment value, so all you're left with is an unpleasant and depressing way in which to waste a few empty hours of your presumably valuable time. The metallic graphics are too clever for their own good, and don't help any (in a game like this, it's primary colours or nothing as far as I'm concerned), and generally the whole thing is a dull and pointless waste of time and money. ● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Try memorising the phone book instead of buying this. You'll get much the same experience for far less money.

32 PERCENT

Ultra-violent, ultra-realistic fight action – just the thing for Xmas!

PIT-FIGHTER

Publisher: Domark
Price: £24.99
Author: Teque London
Release: November 20th

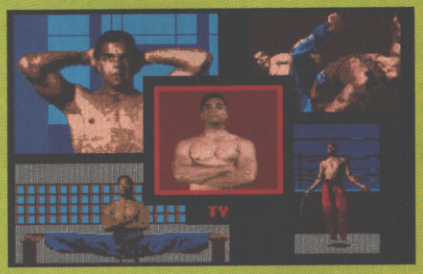
This is Domark's big game for Christmas, and hmm – it's a strange one. For a start, it's a straight beat-'em-up, set in a small area with a number of characters simply running around pounding on each other. You might have thought these had died a death a while ago as being hopelessly old fashioned and limited, but no – recently a lot of big arcade machines have appeared using this formula, and they're starting to filter down to the Amiga. US Gold's *Final Fight* we covered last issue – in rather glowing terms for a beat-'em-up actually – and there's Ocean's *WWF* and Storm's *Final Blow* still to come, but this month the great white hope of the genre is Domark's *Pit-Fighter* and yes, it's a strange one.

Strange initially in the look – this is a game with a gimmick. You can see it in the screenshots easily enough – the characters aren't sprites in the traditional sense, they're animated digitised pictures of real people. Some are professional wrestlers, some are kung fu types and so on – all a bit blocky and pixelised perhaps, but still disconcerting in that they look so much more like real people than the sort of characters you'd normally control in a beat-'em-up. Add the blood that splatters out as you strike a blow, the darkened warehouse settings and lack of a rescue-your-girlfriend plot (the whole thing's based on a series of fights for money) and you get something with a very different, rather nastier atmosphere than your average punch and kick game.

Now, this is something that attracted attention excellently in the arcades – you could see people stop and look at the machine in surprise, perhaps banging a few 10 pees in out of sheer curiosity – and thus it did its job perfectly. On the home computers, of course, it takes rather more to make an impact. A gimmick that's good for a few 50 pees ain't necessarily going to make something worth coughing up £25 for, and for that reason I'm going to ignore the sometimes spectacular, sometimes silly visuals for a moment and talk a bit about the game itself.

It has to be said it has some clever things about it. As well as a large, animated (in a limited sort of a way) and rather grey audience dotted about the warehouses you fight in (there's not actually a pit in sight) there are four fighters in any one round. Two or three are computer controlled – in a two player game you get to team up against them, then fight the other human player (or a computer clone of yourself in one player mode) in a one-on-one grudge match that comes every third bout. Cleverly the computer keeps track of all four players and makes sure it keeps everyone on screen at any one time – if one guy decides to face the wrong way and then wander off into the crowd, the camera, if you will, moves back, the figures receding until the screen can fit everything in.

The camera zooms out to reveal our two muscle boys, standing ready to duke it out for that coveted cash bonus.



This is Ty, measurements 86-64-78. He likes animals and his ambition is to work with children.

Assorted weapons are dotted about the place (crates you can pick up, knives, sticks and so on) and a wide range of fighting moves also add to the thing, meaning there's a lot more to it than your average *IK+* style beat-'em-up. Unfortunately though, it largely lacks the one thing that makes for a good beat-'em-up – feel. Moves aren't really very instinctive – indeed, getting your man simply facing the right way can be a bit of a struggle! – and everything generally feels jerky, sluggish and slightly out of control. Basically then a) *Pit-Fighter* looks interesting, but is ultimately pretty unrewarding to play and b) really should sound the death knell for straight beat-'em-ups as full price products because even the best of them are simply too limited to justify £25 or anything near it. Here's the clearest argument yet for saying that games that work in arcades won't necessarily cut the mustard on a home computer, because arcade games are made to be played in short five or ten minute bursts, while a home game you're committed to for hours. If you really want to go around kicking people in, you'd be better off plumping for the scrolling fantasy setting and sheer variety of a *Golden Axe*, say, anyday.
● *MATT BIELBY*

The computer *Pit-Fighter* lifts my guy right up off the ground, striking a brutal blow to the right knee (notice the rather horrific spurts of blood). Ouch.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Interesting and distinctive looking beat-'em-up converted well to the Amiga – unfortunately the basic game is too limited (and hard to control) for it to really add up to very much.

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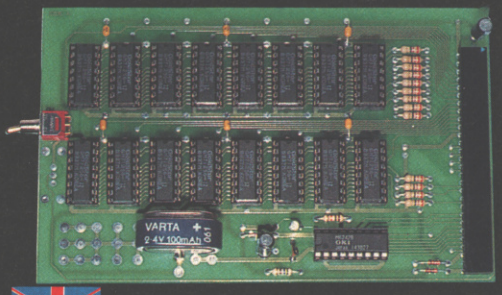

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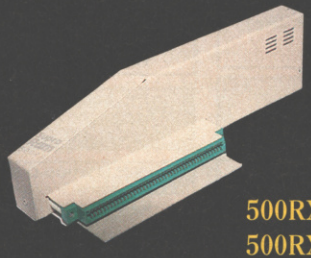

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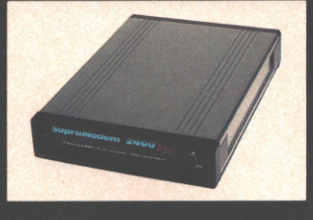

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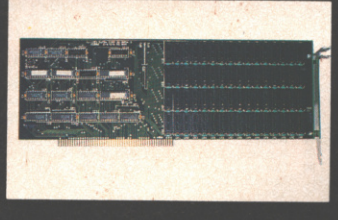

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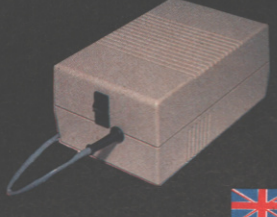

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BUDGET

Some excellent budget games out this month – imagine, *Bubble Bobble* for less than eight quid! – but the real news is that Prism's £2.99 range has finally come good. If you don't pick up some of these, you're missing out...

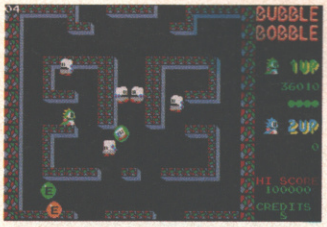
BUBBLE BOBBLE

Publisher: The Hit Squad
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Last issue we reviewed *The Rainbow Collection* from Ocean's new Addicted To Fun label. Our conclusion? That if there are better ways of spending £19.99 than on this *Rainbow Islands/New Zealand Story/ Bubble Bobble* combo we haven't thought of them yet. *If* (and it's quite a big if) you're one of those rare people who don't already own at least one of these three excellent cutsie games, that is. For most of us it may well be a better idea to pick up the ones you haven't got individually at £7.99 – *NZ Story* is already available, *Rainbow Islands* can't be far off, and this month you can get you hands on *Bubble Bobble*, the first of the Bub'n'Bob series that reached its zenith in *Rainbow Islands* and is set to conclude (perhaps – let's hope not) in *Parasol Stars*.

But what's it like? Well, on first loading the game disappoints – very blocky, almost PD quality in some of the graphics, and the gameplay looks deceptively simple. You play one of two cute dinosaurs (boringly transformed into people for the later games in the series) set in a series of single-screen platform worlds – you've got to clear each screen of baddies by trapping them in bubbles, then jumping on them to turn them into collectable fruit, before moving on to the next one.

Simple, yes – not unlike the recent *Rodland* in gameplay in fact – but for me a much better game. Far from looking primitive the colourful graphics seem ideally suited to their task, the dino-versions of Bub'n'Bob have to be the most appealing central characters ever, while the high speed and variety of the gameplay should be an object lesson to others. This is one of those games that adds new baddies and gameplay elements every couple of levels, pacing the difficulty curve perfectly. At 100 levels there's plenty there too – though unfortunately the secret levels of the coin-op haven't been reproduced in the home computer version. Still, it's one of the most fiendishly addictive games ever and appealing to almost anybody (it's one of the few games the girls in the office ever sit down and play). ● *MATT BIELBY.*



***Bubble Bobble* – One of the real classic examples of how to do an arcade conversion. Buy it now!**

THE BOTTOM LINE

Quite simply, if you don't already own this buy it now. A perfect £7.99 game – its only weakness is that it's so much better in two player mode than one.

87 PERCENT

MAGNETIC SCROLLS COMPILATION

Publisher: Infocom
Price: £29.99
Release: Out now

If you thought adventure games had gone out with the advent of the blitter, think again. What's more remarkable about this package than any of the games it contains is the window and menu system it uses. The functions embedded in the system are normally the domain of expensive desktop software suites. Assuming you have one meg, then, you can now spend more time playing the same move in a myriad of possible ways than the weeks it would previously have taken to finish *Fish*, *Corruption* and *Guild of Thieves*.

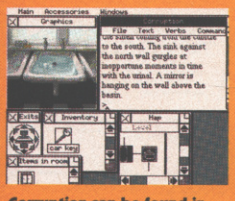
These games first appeared in traditional graphic adventure format, with key illustrations displayed above a text display and > interpreter that threatened to reply "You cannot see the south here" every time you typed in a command. Using the windows system the company developed for the overblown *Wonderland* (as in the one Alice trashed), you can make moves by moving icons, clicking a pointer menus of key commands or typing them in. ("You cannot see the south here.") It is a revolution. Magnetic Scrolls, who first found fame with *The Pawn* and its Infocom-beating parser implementation, now give us a whole bunch of reasons to spontaneously combust in awe of their cleverness.

Guild of Thieves was their second release and it's good to see it again, dressed up or otherwise. It's the only game that has ever really managed to get the concept (apologies to Pseuds' Corner for using the word) of thieving into a game and make it fun. As you try to prove yourself to a town's most discreet brotherhood, you're drawn into a veritable den of iniquity, whatever one of those is. And the ensuing plot unravels faster than knuckles crack when they're caught in a till. There's a high humour quotient and some of the punchlines are good enough to steal for yourself. This stuff is well above second rate.

Fish boasts another first. If you've never played an adventure set entirely in one of those plastic castles that look so natural in the bottom of a goldfish bowl, you've never played *Fish*. Yes, only you, a humble goldfish, can rescue your underwater world from a gang of extraordinary aquatic adversaries known as The Seven Deadly Fins. Extremely silly adventure games have been tried before but most of them have been trying. The problem with *Fish* is that some of it is just so totally hatstand – quite often the stumpers seem either pointless or wasted, occasionally unfair. Still, in my book it's a damn site funnier and more playable than *James Pond*. You'll have a good laugh at the puns, too. I'd make one here but it ain't my plaice.

Weakest of the three games is *Corruption*. Your character is a budding yuppie and the plot seems to involve little more than a succession of lessons in humourless disillusionment. I'm afraid I found it less than captivating and certainly isn't the kind of thing you should think about getting into if you get easily paranoid.

Still, anyone who's ever enjoyed an adventure game will lap up *Fish* and *Guild of Thieves* at least. Even if adventure games usually turn you catatonic from four hundred yards, they've rarely been more playable than the examples here, and the new display siystem makes them more accessible too. They're all notoriously difficult to complete too. Neat.
● *SEAN MASTERSON*



***Corruption* can be found in the most unlikely of places. The sink, however, isn't usually one of them.**

It takes more than a thieving mind to join the *Guild Of Thieves*. Only the lowdown and sneaky need apply.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Interesting and useable new display system gives two classic adventures (and one okayish one) a new lease of life. Ideal for people who got into *Wonderland*, but perhaps expensive if you already own one or more.

80 PERCENT

CABAL

Publisher: The Hit Squad
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

The Bactrian camel is just one of the millions of species that you won't find in *Cabal*, one of the most single-minded examples of that most single-minded of genres, the *Operation Wolf*-style shoot-'em-up. A conversion of the Tad Corporation coin-op, the only major difference between this and other games of the type is that in *Cabal* your character actually appears on screen, so you have some control over bullet-dodging.

Otherwise it's the usual affair with only two types of thing on screen – bad guys and you. This, though, is one of the very best clones around, with crisp, clear graphics, hundreds of enemies to massacre, stages which are just the right length to maintain the fast pace of the action, and a fab little between-level sequence where your man does a silly little dance of joy accompanied by a bouncy jingle which is so out-of-place it's actually quite charming.

The one downer is the hopeless control method for throwing grenades, but if that was the worst game flaw I ever had to cope with then I'd be a happy reviewer indeed. If you're after a shoot-'em-up at budget price, this is certainly one to think about.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Frantic and really pretty groovy slaughter-'em-up that's a touch more involved than most games of the sort.

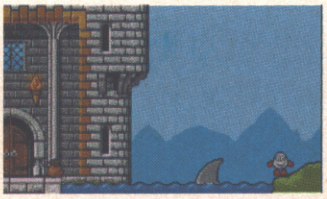
74 PERCENT

●STUART CAMPBELL

MAGICLAND DIZZY

Publisher: Code Masters
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

So here it is at last, Dizzy's third Amiga adventure. The character has sold well over half-a-million games on all formats so far, and has a chart record unrivalled in the history of the industry. Nothing I could do or say could stop this from being a huge hit, but then I'm not going to try. I love the little ovoid scamp, y'see, and as the most accomplished game in the series so far, *Magicland Dizzy* is just dandy by me. The searingly bright cartoon graphics, the fab bouncy music, the well-balanced and rewarding mix of platform-jumping and puzzle-solving, the deceptively gentle pace... the *Dizzy* series didn't get where it is today by not being bloody good fun, pal. If I had to make a criticism (well, it is my job, after all), it would be that this isn't dramatically different from the last two games, but since people are still buying and playing those two today, you can't blame the Codies for not wanting to change such a hugely successful formula. *Magicland Dizzy* is an arcade adventure built on a solid base of character and age-old tried-and-tested gameplay, and I can't really fault it. ● *STUART CAMPBELL*



The *Dizzy* cult just keeps on growing, and you won't hear any complaints here.

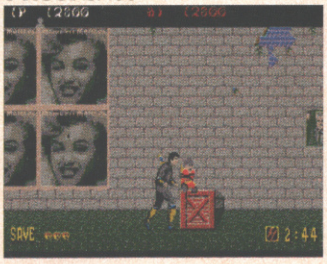
THE BOTTOM LINE

A sure-fire winner for the Codies. A smash with the youngsters, but grown-up players should leave their snobbery at home and give it a try too. Top fun.

84 PERCENT

SHINOBI

Publisher: 16 Blitz
Price: £7.99



Famous film star makes a surprise guest appearance in *Shinobi* shocker!

Release: Out now

Virgin's latest re-release is *Shinobi*, the popular ninja arcade game from Sega which was the coin-op predecessor to US Gold's recent *Shadow Dancer*. As you might expect it's much the same kind of game, a horizontally-scrolling slash-'em-up with baddies to slaughter, poor captured goodies to rescue, and the world to put to rights generally. Though the game suffers from some terrible animation, that doesn't stop it from being a very enjoyable and close clone of the original, and while difficulty is perhaps pitched just a little on the easy side, it's still tricky enough to provide a perfectly respectable amount of entertainment for the paltry eight quid it'll cost you.

In fact, I'd go so far as to say that this is in many ways absolute textbook budget software – loads of simple arcade fun, untaxing and technically unimpressive, yet still lovingly put together (by top converters The Sales Curve) with an eye for coin-op detail. For what it is –and if you ignore the animation – I can't really find any serious fault with *Shinobi* at all.
● *STUART CAMPBELL*

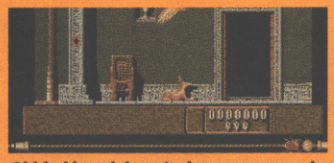
THE BOTTOM LINE

Nothing to set the world on fire, but relaxing and fun to play, and a very good conversion of the original machine. An ideal buy for *Shadow Dancer* fans.

66 PERCENT

THEY'RE BACK! PRISM'S £2.99 RELEASES...

After the wildly varying quality of the last range of £2.99 ultra-cheapies from Prism (from the likes of *Quantox* at 75 percent and the 67 percent-scoring *Plutos* to the 6 percenters *Flight Path 737* and *Protector*), Stuart Campbell was a little alarmed when we asked him to cast his critical eye over the latest batch of eight new games from the same stable. We told him to stop complaining and get on with it.



Old fashioned doesn't always mean good, as clearly proven by *Eye Of Horus*.

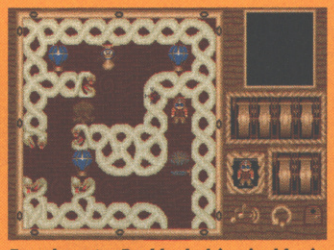
Game: Eye Of Horus

Denton Designs, eh? Don't you just love 'em? Well, if you're an 8-bit veteran you probably do, but they don't have much a track record on the Amiga and looking at this game, you begin to see why. Reminiscent in many ways of their Speccy epic *Gift From The Gods*, *Eye Of Horus* is a huge arcade adventure in the simplest fashion (find a key to unlock a door and collect nine million bits of the mystical amulet or whatever) with minor zapping aspects to it and, not to beat around the bush, it's bloody dreadful. Slow, confusing, graphically primitive, sonically grating – just crap, basically. Mind you, it does score a few points for having the word 'penis' in the manual.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Utter rubbish that succeeds only in making the Amiga look like a C64 on a particularly bad day. Avoid it like a pharaoh's curse.

7 PERCENT



Two character *Boulderdash*-inspired fun in *Prospector In The Mazes Of Xor*.

Game: Prospector In The Mazes Of Xor

This *Boulder Dash*-inspired puzzler almost sneaked in at the bottom end of our All-Time Top 100 (it wasn't anything to do with us – guest 'expert' and PC Format editor Bob Wade pushed for it) funnily enough. It's a pretty and engrossing little game, and some of the puzzles will test your powers of lateral thinking to the limit. You control two characters, which gives things an original twist, and teamwork is essential if you want to get anywhere.

In fact, thinking about it, it shares several elements with The Hit Squad's recent *Head Over Heels* which we gave 92% a couple of issues ago. It's not as good as that, but you'll certainly get three quid's worth of entertainment out of it, especially with 15 huge scrolling mazes to torment yourself in. Well worth risking a bit of pocket money on.

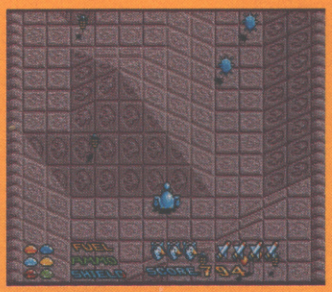
THE BOTTOM LINE

Involving and tricky maze puzzle that's more than worth the paltry asking price. If your brain's been playing you up recently, this'll teach it a lesson.

66 PERCENT

Game: Star Goose

If you remember Gremlin's *HATE* then you'll be halfway to understanding *Star Goose*. The scrolling shoot-'em-up gameplay is very similar, as are the 'tiled-floor' graphics and the basic feel. *Star Goose* is a bit more interesting, though, on account of the more varied gameplay (there's a 3D tunnel section every now and again where you can collect fuel and ammo and stuff) and the contoured play area with mountains and trenches to fly through. That said, it's still a pretty limited arcade romp, but for some reason I really like it. It might lack something as a 'proper' budget re-release, but you can't really argue with it at this price at all.



Take a gander (sorry) at *Star Goose*. You just might find you like it!

THE BOTTOM LINE

Highly enjoyable short-term arcade fun. Probably my personal favourite of this batch, and well worth three quid of anyone's money.

82 PERCENT

Game: Archipelagos

Many people will already be familiar with this classic game, as it was given away with our sister mag Amiga Format a few months ago. If you didn't get it then, you probably won't know that it's a thoughtful but fast moving 3D puzzle

The arty 3D landscapes of the beautifully different *Archipelagos*

SUPER SIM PACK

Publisher: US Gold
Price: £29.99
Release: Out now

Hmm. Okay, *International 3D Tennis* and *Italy 1990* I'll buy, but *Crazy Cars II* and *Airborne Ranger* simulations? I can see we're in for some pretty liberal interpretations of definition here, especially the bit about "The very best in sport, driving and airborne action". But, hey, let's not prejudge – let's take every game on its own merits.

International 3D Tennis opens with some of the best computer music ever (the theme from TV's Wimbledon coverage) and features the voice of a real umpire throughout the game. You can view the action from just about any angle imaginable, and the vector graphics serve their purpose admirably. Things fall down a bit when it comes to the actual game though, as the ball tends to wobble about and it's all a touch slow. Neat, then, but not nearly as good as it could have been.

Italy 1990 (or the marginally updated *Winners Edition* which is what you get here) was my favourite of the World Cup games which appeared last year, with its lovely graphics, TV-like presentation and wealth of authentic detail. It was always too easy though, and it's likely to be even more so the second time around. A good solid game, but not a world-beater.

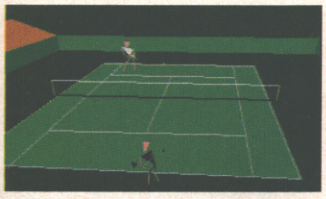
You might not think that MicroProse, with their track record of accurate and involving simulations, would be much cop at arcade games, and you'd be right. *Airborne Ranger* suffers terribly from MicroProse drowning the vaguely-tolerable *Commando*-style gameplay in a sea of set-up screens and long disk accesses. Forget it.

And then, well, then we find ourselves right at the bottom of the barrel – *Crazy Cars II*. Even worse than the original *Crazy Cars*, *Crazy Cars II* was almost punk in it's 'you don't need talent to write a top-selling computer game' ethos.

In summary then, your 30 quid gets you two okay games and two real sub-PD-quality turkeys. Not a great deal, is it?

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

Fun for at least, ooh, two minutes, maybe – it's MicroProse's *Airborne Ranger*



***International 3D Tennis* – funny looking little triangle men, but it works**

The not entirely bad (and actually quite pretty) *Italy 1990* – best World Cup game

***Crazy Cars II* – Trust us, it's actually far worse to play than it is looks**

THE BOTTOM LINE

Nope, sorry, there isn't a single stand-out game in this pack, and a couple of them are truly disgraceful. £30 can get you much more than this.

37 PERCENT

---

game with a look of *Space Harrier* and a feel of *The Sentinel* or that *Archipelagos* drew great reviews at the time of its release and still holds up well today – in fact, it's No.55 in the AMIGA POWER All-Time Top 100. It's likely that only the coverdisk appearance stopped it from getting a normal budget re-release, so if you missed it on Format you'd have to be particularly daft to miss it again. Passing up on something this good once might be unfortunate, passing up on it twice begins to look like carelessness...

THE BOTTOM LINE

An involving and rather charming game which well deserves its excellent reputation. Get it now.

80 PERCENT

Game: Star Ray

This celebrated *Defender* clone garnered many fans on its initial release several years ago, but for everyone who loved it there was another nitpicker (stand up, Jeff Minter) who moaned that it wasn't quite close enough to the original, or that the lush detailed backdrops made it almost impossible to see what was going on. The truth lies, as usual, somewhere in between. This is indeed a fast and zappy clone, but the scenery is a bit of a pain in the neck where graphical clarity is concerned. Still, Jeff Minter isn't anyone to talk about inaccurate *Defender* copies (no hyperspace, eh Jeff?), so the jury in this case comes down on the side of the angels. *Star Ray* is a groovy and pretty blasterama with more than enough action to keep your average zapper entertained for an hour or six, and, as is the case with almost every game here, is more than acceptable value for its absurd price.

Defender* with good graphics? It must be the excellent *Star Ray!

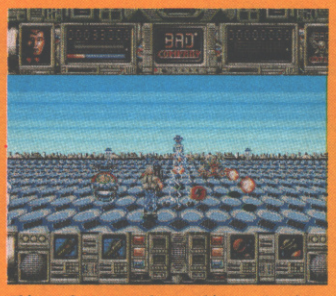
THE BOTTOM LINE

Fabby shoot-'em-up that could do with just a tiny bit less graphical detail, but unless you're a real *Defender* trainspotter you'll more than likely love it.

79 PERCENT

Game: Bad Company

The first thing to say about *Bad Company* is 'Don't be misled by the box shots'. From the pics you'd be forgiven for thinking that this is a *Space Harrier* clone, but this game is as earthbound as they come. You control one of a team of eight ruff'n'tuff space commandos who run into a 3D scrolling landscape blasting away at bad guys and completely failing to be involved in anything remotely complex. This is gaming at its most basic, but it's still reasonably entertaining for five minutes or so, I just doubt if anyone's very likely to ever load it up twice. It looks fine, it sounds fine, younger players may well enjoy the bonehead zapping content, but ultimately it's a bore.



This *Bad Company* has nothing to do with *Space Harrier* or 2000AD

THE BOTTOM LINE

Fairly dull shoot-'em-up with a few funny touches but nothing in the way of involving gameplay. And it's really nothing like *Space Harrier*, either.

44 PERCENT

Game: Star Blaze

Blimey, I remember this style of game. The forerunner of the likes of *Elite*, the pseudo-3D space shoot-'em-up was a popular genre in the early years of the 8-bits, and *Star Blaze* returns to the formula with a vengeance. I also remember the ads for the game the first time round, where publishers Logotron tried to liken it to *R-Type* but viewed from the spaceship's cockpit. (Wit in the software industry – whatever happened to it, eh?)

Anyway, *Star Blaze* isn't too dreadful as blasts from the distant past go, but this kind of simplistic left-right-up-down shooting action was really more suited to the ZX81 and the like. In 1991, it's just a touch too primitive. Not a hopeless waste of money then – you get worth than this at the eight quid mark – but hardly the best choice if you're only going to pick up one of the games here.

Primitive graphics are here again, with the weird 3D *Star Blaze* blaster

THE BOTTOM LINE

What's here is all very well and good, but whatever's happened to the other 480K of memory? This won't set anyone's pulse racing for long – give it a miss.

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PD

RATINGS: ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

PHASE II
(VIRUS FREE, EXCLUSIVEWARE)

Scramble* days are here again in *Phase II

Virus Free's Exclusiveware series (non-PD software at PD prices, with royalties paid to the programmers) has been steadily improving over the last couple of months, and this latest effort is easily the best so far. A simple *Scramble*-style horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up, *Phase II* is pretty and playable, if just a touch on the slow side. It starts off very easy indeed, but by the third level you're in big trouble if you haven't collected some serious power-ups. It's not the kind of game that's ever going to set the world alight, but it's enjoyable and addictive enough for a quick zap every now and again, and at three quid that's a fair enough deal in my book.

VERDICT: Not stunning, but a very neat little blast all the same. You could do much worse than give this a go. ***

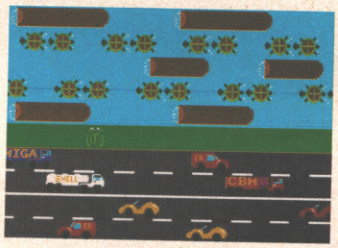
SUPER TWINTRIS
(PD SOFT, DISK NO.1816)

Twice the *Tetris* fun in *Super Twintris*

Tetris, Tetris, Tetris. Every day another PD clone of the legendary Russian block-stacker arrives on the scene, and every day we all sigh with disappointment as it fails to match up to the incredible Nintendo Game Boy version. This, though, is undoubtedly the best attempt so far. For one or two players simultaneously (like the arcade game), *Super Twintris* offers easy and hard modes, a selection of crap tunes to listen to while playing, halfway-respectable controls for once, a great 'earthquake' effect when you get multiple lines (increasing in magnitude up to the point where you get four lines at once, whereupon the screen shudders around explosively and impressively), and gameplay which at last comes close to replicating the excitement and tension of the original. It's still flawed (you get rather too much scope for shifting the blocks around after they've landed), but it's the best way to play *Tetris* on the Amiga to date. Which is why we've put in on the disk this month for you all to enjoy, in fact.

VERDICT: There's room for improvement yet in the *Tetris* field, but this is a very good effort and something of a must-get at PD prices. **

JUMPER
(START PD)



***Jumper*: Come on in, the water's lovely!**

What? You want more *Frogger*? Oh, alright then. This version of the Sega's classic amphibious arcade machine comes on The Assassins disk IV, a compilation of six games which also includes the brilliant *Go-Muku* (reviewed in Issue Six) and the not-half-bad *Jumpy* (from Issue Five), plus a card game, a *Mastermind* game, and yet another version of the *Tron* lightcycles game. *Jumper* itself is a great copy of the coin-op containing most of the original features (increasing difficulty, diving turtles, riverbank predators), which starts off easy but quickly gets very tricky indeed. Imagine trying to cross the M25 five times at 8.45 in the morning with someone behind you with a stopwatch going "Hurry up, you've only got seven seconds left!" and you'll be close to understanding the pressures of this seemingly leisurely game. If you liked *Bullfrogger* at all, you'll love this, and with all those other great games on the disk for a couple of quid... (fill in the rest yourself).

VERDICT: A bargain and a half. In fact, more like two bargains. And then some. More essential PD. **

RAPHAEL'S REVENGE
(PD SOFT, DISK NO. 1818)

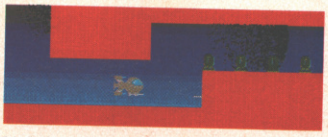
***Raphael's Revenge*: Oh dear, oh dear**

Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit. Teenage Mutant bloody Ninja Turtles. Everything you need, really.

**VERDICT: Duff, tedious, confusing and fairly pointless run-of-the-mill *SEUCK* clunker. You can do a lot better than this. **

SQUAMBLE
(PD SOFT, DISK NO. 1749)

Oh, cruel disappointment! The ad for this called it '*Scramble*' and used almost exactly the same wording as the one for *Asteroids*, and although it doesn't actually claim anything of the sort, I hoped it was going to be another coin-op conversion of the same flawless quality. When it arrived and I loaded it up though, you can imagine (from looking at the screenshot) what a let-down it was. Primitive graphics and not exactly action-packed gameplay looked set to consign this one to the bin, but on playing it for a while it turned out to be actually quite good fun. It follows roughly the same layout as the arcade game (mountains, tunnels, UFOs and so on), and while calling it a conversion would be using the word in its very loosest sense, this is still a perfectly enjoyable little game.



It's been a good month for *Scramble* fans.

VERDICT: Fast and zappy (well, after the first couple of levels) and generally not bad at all. Don't expect too much and you might be pleasantly surprised. *

BEST PD GAME EVER!

Back in time to 1979 with *Asteroids*

ASTEROIDS
(PD SOFT, DISK NO.1735)

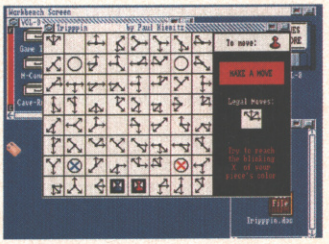
Scene: 1991, the offices of AMIGA POWER (Britain's brightest, bestest and biggest-selling Amiga games mag). All around are some of the most stunning examples of the game writer's art ever seen – *Rainbow Islands*, *Speedball 2*, *Lemmings* – an endless litany of technical magnificence, beautiful graphics, incredible sound and music. A hapless observer walks into the office one afternoon to find every Amiga in the place occupied by a black-and-white single-screen game with lines for graphics and sound consisting of pings, beeps, and the theme from *Jaws*. Jaded hacks are glued to their screens, fingers flitting feverishly across keyboards, the tension in the air broken only by the intermittent yells of frustration and clattering sounds as Amigas are repeatedly punched in fits of temper. New high scores are shouted to and fro and gloated over, and trivialities like working, eating and going home are completely forgotten. The cause of all this hormonal havoc? *Asteroids*.

For many arcade veterans the greatest coin-op game of all time (a position only seriously challenged by Williams' *Defender*), this oft-imitated classic has finally been done justice on a home computer with a perfect, flawless conversion by German coder Kris Schulte. Everything is right – the graphics, the sound, the positioning of the keys (keys!), even the little Atari logo at the bottom of the screen. The gameplay is as superlative as ever, and if you've never played this monster before, get ready for the most addictive experience you'll ever have without breaking the law. This is a game good enough to make you want to own an Amiga, and if you've got one already (which you probably do), you'll be thrilled to see we've included it on this month's coverdisk (or at least, you should be).

VERDICT: There aren't enough stars in the sky for this one. Play it, love it, and send the programmer a shareware donation immediately. He deserves it. ***

TRIPPPIN
(SEVENTEEN BIT, DISK GAMES GALORE 8)

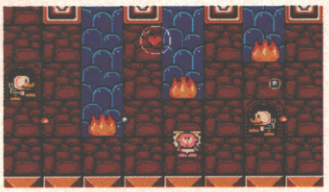
Time for this month's ride on the Bizarre Bus. *Tripppin* (how apt) is a board game which would be impossible to play on a board. It's a two-player (or one player against the Amiga) game where the objective is to move your piece to your home square. The twist is, you can only move in one of the directions indicated by the arrows on the square occupied by your opponents's piece. So, you have to think very tactically in order to balance moving towards your own goal while preventing your opponent from progressing at the same time. This would be all very well and good, but for the game's one flaw – the arrows change, apparently at random, at every turn, so it's impossible to plan out any kind of strategy, which is a bit awkward in a game of, er, strategy. Still, it's an interesting diversion and the disk does contain a number of other decent programs (including *Cave Runner, Missile Command* and *Space War*, a conversion of one of the very first video games), so it's worth a pop all the same.



The un-strategy of *Trippin*

VERDICT: *Tripppin* is novel and quite good fun despite the strange rules, and with the other stuff makes for an entertaining if unremarkable disk. ***

GO LOOLY
(START PD)



More SEUCK antics in *Go Looly*.

This comes on a disk with two other *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit* games, and despite initial appearances, that's what this one is too. It's a fun little number, and in terms of *SEUCK* it's rather more well-programmed than the usual stuff, but the dull use of colour lets it down just a little bit. *No Man's Land* is a more traditional-style blaster, good-looking and tricky but maybe just a tiny fraction slow. Both of these are very good if not staggering games, but the most interesting one on the disk is *Raid*. It's another vertical scroller, the most distinguishing feature of which is that it's a complete lift from Storm's recent classic *SWIV*. The backgrounds, the enemy craft, the styles of the levels, everything is borrowed directly from the earlier game. Of course, since it's PD you can't call it a rip-off – more like a tribute – but it's a shame the programmer couldn't have added his own stamp to it somehow. The game itself is fine, but having to score multiple hits on every single enemy makes it excessively tough and unrewarding, and it's certainly the least playable of the three collected here.

VERDICT: An excellent-value disk with three good and varied (well, for *SEUCK* games) shoot-'em-ups which are all worth a look for different reasons. So, er, take a look. ****

CRYSTAL CAVERNS
(PD SOFT, DISK NO. L15)

Hmm. Odd. Distinctly odd. This one meg-only *AMOS* Licenceware game released through Pollysoft has me puzzled. It's reminiscent of Steve Crow's 8-bit and ST classic *Starquake* in many ways and plays very quickly and smoothly, but... where's the rest of it? Your cute little character leaps and bounds around lots of platformed caverns quite chirpily, but enemies, things to pick up, points to score and just about anything else are all conspicuous by their absence. Every few screens you'll find one tiny little alien bouncing up and down on the spot or trudging solemnly left and right along a small length of platform, but that's it as far as excitement goes. You just keep trekking along, occasionally coming across a teleport or a new style of cavern background or an energy-restoring slab, and wondering why on Earth this game needs a megabyte of memory to run in. It doesn't even have any sound! It's strangely involving for a while as you search desperately around trying to find the point, but when you don't come across one after an hour or so it rapidly becomes pretty damn boring.

Very *Starquake*, but without the good bits.

VERDICT: If I'm missing something important here I'd love to hear about it, but this game seems to be half-finished. The most inexplicable use of expanded memory in history. **

DESTINATION MOONBASE
(START)

***Destination Moonbase* takes the *Lunar Lander* concept, removes the jagged surface, and falls fl at on its face.**

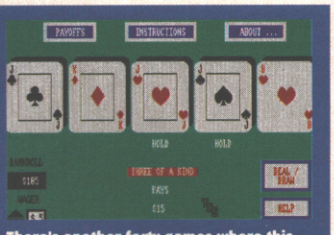
Blimey, I haven't seen one of these for a while – it's a *Lunar Lander* game. The incredibly old Atari coin-op was one of the most original – and one of the trickiest – arcade games ever, and it really captured the imaginations of 8-bit programmers in the early 80s, with every other magazine listing being some kind of variant on the theme. It's a bit strange, because landing an unarmed probe on the surface of the Moon with no obstacles except gravity and limited fuel never seemed like the most gripping game concept imaginable, but there you go. This shareware version contains all the usual features like the spaceship, the moon, the limited fuel and the, er, gravity (ahem), and it's, er, fine as far as it goes. The graphics are a little over-fussy (the original used crisp *Asteroids*-style vectors) and the action is even more sedate than usual, but if *Lunar Lander* was your thing then this'll bring the memories flooding back. It doesn't really have that old magic, though, so it's recommended for real aficionados only.

VERDICT: A blast from the past in more ways than one, and it's just a little bit too primitive to hold much appeal these days. **

HUMDINGER 41
(TELESCAN)

Ulp. This two-disk collection of PD (selling at a penny short of a fiver) contains not one, not two, not three, but 41 (count 'em!) prize examples of Amiga software from the land of the free. It includes many games I've covered in this column before (such as *Bally, Tiles, Missile Command, Go-Muku* and others too numerous to mention), and, er, what else do you want me to say about it?

...such as this bizarre shoot-'em-up



There's another forty games where this card based jobbie came from...

Even the most mathematically-retarded can work out that 41 games for a fiver is a hell of a good deal (about 12p a time, in fact), especially since a healthy number of them are extremely good games in their own right. You simply can't go wrong with this compilation, and that's all there is to it.

VERDICT: Lots of brilliant, good, average and duff stuff alike, but you'll get many an hour's fun for your money here. ****

DIZZY LIZZY
(POLLY SOFT)

Recognise these rather jolly graphics, anyone?

Hang on a minute, haven't I seen this before somewhere? It's... it's... it can't be... it's... *Bombuzal*! Oh no! Panic! But wait. It's not actually the AMIGA POWER staff's favourite puzzle game ever ('mmf mmf eep' - Gary Penn) at all, but a PD *Boulderdash* kind of thing which, for reasons best known to the programmer, has 'borrowed' most of the graphics from the 2D version of Tony Crowther's classic of bomb defusion. It certainly gives it a big'n'bouncy look, but in gameplay terms it's lacking somewhat, the screen being too small to give you any kind of an idea of where everything is. The blocky scrolling can make it difficult to ascertain whether you're actually moving at all at times, and control is a bit on the sticky side too. Things improve by the second level, but really this is too much of a chore to play. It looks good but there's very little fun to be had.

VERDICT: There are lots of *Boulderdash* clones in the PD better than this. Try *Flaschbier*, or *Cave Runner*, or pretty much anything, really. **

Contact addresses for this month's games: VIRUS FREE PD, 23 Elborough Road, Moredon, Swindon, Wilts SN2 2LS ☎ 0793 512321; START COMPUTER SYSTEMS, 20 Holmside, Sunderland SR1 3JE ☎ 091 565 2605; SEVENTEEN BIT SOFTWARE, PO Box 97, Wakefield, WF1 1XX ☎ 0924 366982

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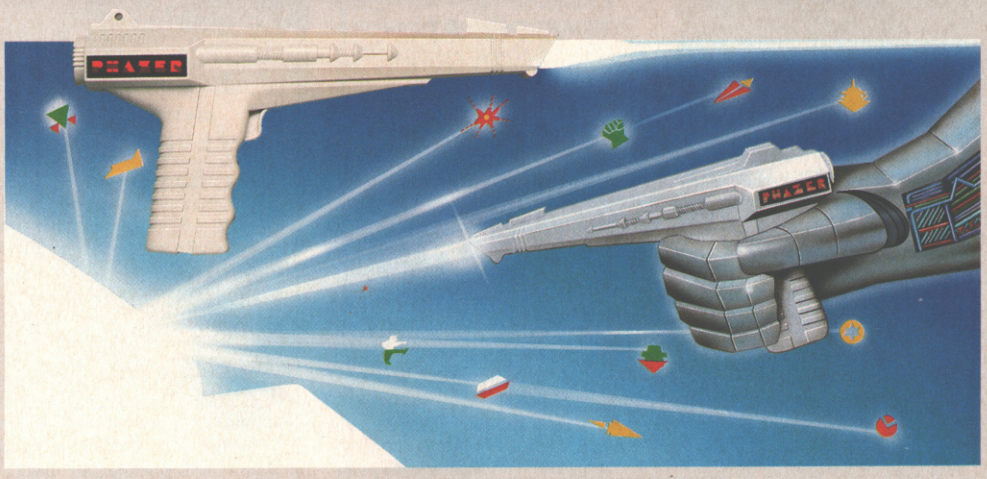

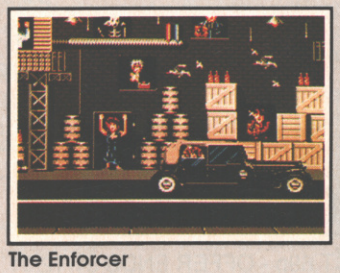

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And why are we (or rather, why are our chums at US Gold, who've stumped up for the prize) being so generous? Well, it's to celebrate the release of *Another World*, Delphine's absolutely stunning new graphic adventure game, one of the new products we raved about in our special US Gold preview feature last issue. Seems like it'll be here sooner than we thought – we'll have a review next issue with luck! – so the timing seems eminently suitable, especially as a) EuroDisney is located in Paris (home of Delphine) and b) we'll be transporting you to 'another world' (the wonderful one of Disney, in fact) ourselves!

Ten runners up won't be forgotten either – they'll all win a copy of the game.

Now for the catch...

We can't send everybody to Disney, so if you want a chance to win, you're going to have to find out a thing or two about Disney movies so you can answer the questions below. Once you've got the answers, write them on the back of a postcard, then send it off to: *Paris In The Spring Compo*, AMIGA POWER, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW. And remember to include your own name and address (there're always a few chumps who forget!).

RULES AND REGULATIONS

- The closing date for this competition is November 30th 1991. Later than that, and you can just forget it, matey!
- The editor's decision is final on all matters relating to this competition.
- Employees of Future Publishing, Walt Disney, or US Gold are not eligible to enter this compo.

And finally, introducing the questions...

Ah yes, the questions. They're not easy (but they're not all that tricky either) so get your thinking caps on. We want to know:

1) What was Mickey Mouse's first movie?
2) In which film does Cruella de Vil appear?
3) Who played the inventor and father in 'Honey I Shrunk the Kids'?

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AMIGA POWER COMPO WINNERS

Okay, so it's been a long time coming, but we've finally plucked up the courage to dive into the huge teetering mound of postcards and pick out a few competition winners, going all the way back to the heady days of Issue One. Fingers crossed then as, without further ado, we open the first of the golden envelopes...

TOP 100 COMPETITION
The Answers:
1. Assault On Precinct 13 (*NOT Bomb-The-Bass-Play-Assault-On-Precinct-13, you lazy sods*)
2. *Passionate Patti In Pursuit Of Pulsating Pectorals*
3. *Mah Jong*
4. *Chaos, Rebelstar*
5. Mel Croucher
6. *Bubble Bobble*
7. *F-19 Stealth Fighter (you wouldn't believe some of the answers we got for this. How could it possibly be* Laser Squad*?)*
8. *Air Duel*
9. Paul Shirley
10. *Dungeon Master*

And the lucky winner who'll be taking home (at some point) every single game in our All-Time Top 100 (or as many as we can find, anyway) is Clare Mathewson of London.

WHO KILLED GARY PENN?
Loads of entries for this, implicating pretty much everyone you could imagine, but the winner had to be this ridiculous entry from Stephen Richardson of Whitley Bay. (His capitals, by the way).

My name is VIC, VIC TWENTY, the world's greatest detective. I was called in on this case because of the wide SPECTRUM of crimes I have covered. I began by examining everything in the office so that I could MONITOR the situation. I was tired after my HARD DRIVE from Newcastle, and decided to have a cool, refreshing can of SPRITE, but BOB the COPPER had drunk the last one, so I had to make do with a BLITTER LEMMING...

I examined the DISK on the office record player, 'WHEN I'M C64' by the Beatles. I never knew what people saw in those BUGS. Unfortunately there were no prints on the record as an ENTERPRISE-ing person had wiped it clean . Suddenly I saw what I thought was a vital clue, a SMALL FOOTPRINT (*!! -Ed*) beside the body. Unfortunately it had been left by a careless PC who'd examined the deceased.

I decided to talk to the cleaner and asked him to identify himself to me. "I B 'iM", he said in a broad Devonshire accent (*!!! -Ed*), and although he could offer no useful information, he asked for my autograph FOR MATT...

Alison and Susanne arrived, and on hearing the news of Gary's demise burst into tears. I tried to CONSOLE them. Alison sobbed, "He was such a GAME BOY. I'm going to donate all of his GAME GEAR to charity, he would have wanted that. Just let me keep his cuff-LYNX to remember him by." I decided to talk to RAMshaw as Alison had her HAND-HELD by a kindly constable.

I asked Mark about his dental appointment. "Don't talk to me about that DRILLER", he snarled. "He certainly gave me an INCENTIVE to brush my teeth in future".

I decided to call it a night and drove off in my small family saloon (or COMPACT as our American cousins might say) to look for a hotel. Just my luck, they were all booked up due to the UNIX (Fnaar, fnaar) convention in town. I ended up in a CD motel called Dee's place, and soon found out why. D-PAINT was peeling off the walls and DE-BUGGER wouldn't give me a refund when I complained. (*Snip! -Ed*)

Well, you get the idea. It went on for quite a while longer, but it gave us all a good chuckle, so watch out for a CDTV dropping through your letterbox and smashing to pieces on the mat pretty soon, Stephen.

UP IN THE AIR COMPETITION
The correct answer for this one is a matter of some debate, and after a long and impassioned letter of great reasoning and effort from Damian Bree of Ealing, we decided that he was the true winner. We can't go into the reasons too deeply, (we start to get a bit lost around about 'Sin Latitude A x Sin Latitude B plus Cos Lat A x Cos Lat B times Cos change of latitude', if the truth be known), but trust us, he's right. Damian will be testing out his global navigation theories in a real plane sometime soon with some flying lessons courtesy of MicroProse.

DARKMAN COMPETITION
Another wide range of answers for this one, but the lucky chap who'll be wandering about the streets bumping into things and falling down manholes while he's watching his new pocket TV is Colin Howard of Harlow. Ocean polo shirts also go to David Bradley of Codsall, Andrew Kesson of Newcastle, Michael Jones of Birmingham, James Stanton of Brentwood, Paul Clifton of Swindon and Christopher Sorsby of Harrogate. Hope they fit okay!

More (more!) compo winners next month!

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MEGA 21 PACK ONE

POWERPLAY

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CARTOON CLASSICS MEGA 21

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MEGA 21 MONITOR AND PRINTER PACK PACK THREE

POWERPLAY

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(See Standard Features List)

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Active, enquiring young minds love seeing the cartoon character called Prof. entertain and teach. Children take charge of Prof. on the computer, active learning. Follows National Curriculum(N.C.).

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IMAGINE THIS, AND YOU CAN START TO GRASP THE CONCEPT OF CDTV.

THE INTEGRAL COMPACT DISK DRIVE, IS THE KEY TO THE POWER OF CDTV. ITS STORAGE CAPACITY IS EQUIVALENT TO AROUND A QUARTER OF A MILLION FULL PAGES OF TEXT. THIS WHEN INTEGRATED WITH THE 1 MB OF INTERNAL AMIGA CIRCUITRY, CREATES A SYSTEM, WHICH FROM A CD DISK, CAN GIVE YOU ACCESS TO AN UNIMAGINABLE SPECTRUM OF REAL WORLD IMAGES, NEVER SEEN COMBINED BEFORE. THESE VIVID IMAGES, WITH WORDS AND SOUNDS, GIVE YOU A WHOLE NEW DIMENSION IN HOME EDUCATION, ENTERTAINMENT & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY. AND... DON'T FORGET, THAT CDTV CAN PLAY IN SUPERB QUALITY, ANY NORMAL AUDIO MUSIC CD, AND IT CAN ALSO PLAY THE NEW CD+G DISKS, WHICH GIVE DIGITAL SOUND AND ON SCREEN GRAPHICS.
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DUE TO BE RELEASED SOON - Please call us for latest availability.

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Pro-gen Amiga Genlock

The Pro-gen AMIGA Genlock allows you to mix your Amiga display with any PAL video display whether it is from a VCR, Laserdisk player or a Camcorder. In fact any item of video equipment which outputs a PAL composite video signal.Combined with the Amiga computer the Pro-Gen gives you the facilities of a desktop video editing suite. Take your own films & give them a professional look by OVERLAYING TITLES or by SUPER IMPOSING YOUR OWN GRAPHICS created in packages like Spectracolor or Deluxe Paint. Pro-Gen is supplied with Oxxi's Spectra-color paint & animation package (see below).

FREE

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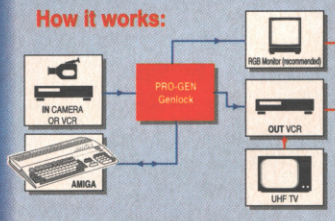

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Harwoods Pro-Ram is our best selling Amiga upgrade with 16chip RAM, similar in design to CBM's A501 and works exactly the same. The Cumana CAX 354 external drive is a brand leader in the 3.5" market having received a great deal of praise over the years. And... to round off we also include a 3.5" Disk Head Cleaner too!!!

ALL THIS FOR THE AMAZING PRICE OF ONLY... £79.95

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These two packs are aimed at the designer who needs to get a great deal from his Amiga. A superb quality monitor in the PHILIPS CM8833/II has been put with a choice of either the CITIZEN SWIFT9 or the CITIZEN SWIFT 24 printer. You choose, but whichever combination you have the price has been designed to SAVE YOU MONEY. Buying together will save you £££'s!

PACK 2 with a Citizen Swift 9 Costs Just...
£479.95

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AMIGA SOFTWARE

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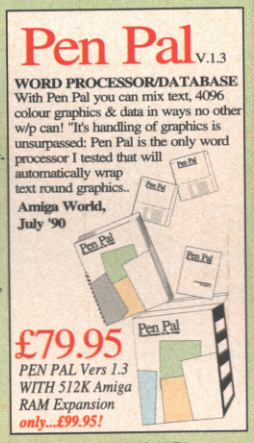

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FREE... Fully Tailored Dust Cover with all Dot Matrix Printers

PRINTERS

All printers in our range include the following standard features...

☆ Standard Centronics parallel port unless otherwise stated for direct connection to Amiga, PC's, ST etc. and come with a:
☆ FREE CONNECTOR LEAD & A FREE TAILORED DUST COVER!

When you are comparing our prices to others make sure that the same essential items are included eg. Printer Lead, Dust Cover, Postage and VAT etc.

CITIZEN 120D+ - Up to 120/25 cps — £149.95
Very reliable low cost printer (please specify interface on order)
- ❑ Interchangeable interfaces for Centronics RS 232 or Serial type for CBM 64 etc
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NEW FASTER STAR LC20 (Replaces LC10) - Up to 150/38 cps — £159.95
Replacement for our most popular Mono Dot-Matrix printer and at a super low introductory price
- ❑ Multiple font options easily accessible from front panel
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CITIZEN 124D MONO 24 PIN PRINTER — £209.95
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- ❑ Supplied with colour & mono ribbons
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Citizen 124D Automatic Sheet Feeder	£79.95
Citizen 124D Printer Stand	£24.95
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CITIZEN 124	BLACK ONLY	£4.95	£24.95	N/A	N/A
CITIZEN SWIFT 9	BLACK/COLOUR	£4.95	£24.95	£16.95	£99.95
CITIZEN SWIFT 24	BLACK/COLOUR	£4.95	£24.95	£16.95	£99.95
STAR LC10/20	BLACK ONLY	£4.95	£24.95	N/A	N/A
STAR LC200 C	BLACK/COLOUR	£6.95 ZX9	£36.95 ZX9	£12.95 ZX9CL	£69.95 ZX9CL
STAR LC24/200 M	BLACK ONLY	£8.95 Z24	£49.95 Z24	N/A	N/A
STAR LC24/200 C	BLACK/COLOUR	£8.95 Z24	£49.95 Z24	£14.95 X24CL	£74.95 X24CL
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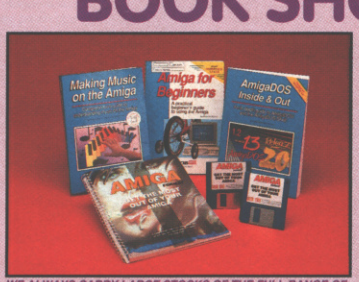

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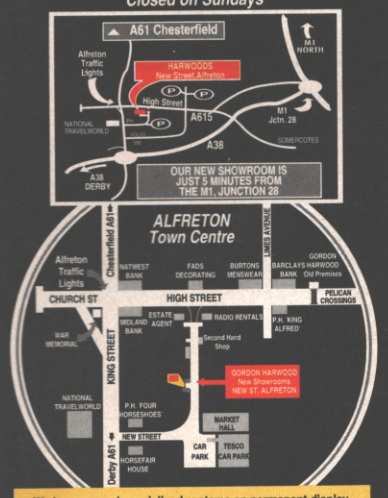

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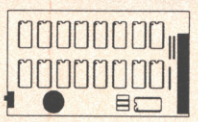
Amiga A500 RAM CARDS



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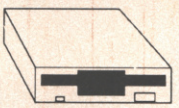

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DO THE write THING

Questions (like "What is a virus?") answered, complaints (like "Whatever happened to the ECES?") responded to, reader reviews (like this one on *Player Manager*) published, prizes (like £50 of free software!) awarded and more! All this and we've only scratched the surface of the column they're all calling 'Do The Write Thing.' Plus! The return of Stuart Hardy!

● **Address your letters to AMIGA POWER, Beaufort Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW**

Dear AMIGA POWER,

I recently purchased *Moonwalker* by US Gold and I was disgusted! If I had purchased this for TWO POUNDS it would still be a complete waste of money. How can US Gold do a CRAP game like this but then come up with a well amazing game like *The Secret Of Monkey Island*??

Yours disgustingly (sic)
Jason Watts, Poole

So Moonwalker*'s crap, is it? (Yes folks, we bring you the most up-to-date news as it happens!)*

Dear AMIGA POWER,

I won't carry out the usual praising of your magazine, but I will admit it is one of the, if not the, best type of magazine on the shelves (*Er, thanks, I think -Ed*). Anyway, I'll get to the point of the letter. My colleague and I have stumbled upon a potentially blockbusting idea for a new genre of game.

However, we cannot proceed further without outside aid. We have done our best with our humble PC and Amiga 3000, but we must admit defeat. Please could you advise us upon what we should do now? Can anybody help us?

Yours,
Toby Seth and John Buckley

Well, can anybody? (You could always try talking to a friendly software house, I suppose).

Dear AMIGA POWER,

I am writing in response to Gary "I couldn't play any game in the entire universe to save my life" Taphouse (Issue Five, p.90). He praises nearly all his 'Top 20 Worst Amiga Games' for audio/visuals but his only complaint is that he can't actually play them (*That's not strictly true, but never mind -Ed*). My advice to you, Mr Taphouse, is to try practising a little with these games, especially *Kick Off 2*.

I was particularly annoyed about his first comment in the bit where he was slagging *Brat* off, the one about *Gods*.

Grumbles aside, good work AMIGA POWER. Keep going.

Love and kisses (not really),
'Jam The Man', Farnham.

PS Chris Milkins, Stuart Campbell may be a loss, he may be a prat and he may be a tad queer, but that doesn't change the fact that he's the best reviewer at present in AMIGA POWER.

But Stuart hates Kick Off 2 *as well, 'Jam' -Ed.*

Dear AMIGA POWER,

Please could you clearly state whether or not each game you review is hard disk compatible. And all software developers please make a note, a lot of Amiga owners have hard disks and we would like to use them for loading all software, so please put this option into your games. This option comes with virtually all PC software, so why not Amiga software?

Yours faithfully,
Kevin Howell, Bristol

PS What's happened to Ocean's *Epic*?
PPS I hate *Kick Off 2*!

A fair point Kevin – there's no reason why software houses shouldn't state it themselves on their boxes alongside the information about which Amigas it works on – but it would simply take too much time for us to faff about trying to check out every game we review each month for compatibility ourselves. Remember though, if a game doesn't work with the hard drive in, all you have to do is take it out...

Yo! AMIGA POWER,

Having been a great fan of Future Publishing's computer magazines for some time now, I was glad to see the release of AMIGA POWER, and AP has lived up to my expectations apart from one thing...

Way back in 1987, I thought that my Amstrad Action costing £1.25 with a free tape (instead of the usual £1) was ludicrous! Mind you, I didn't mind because the tapes were always good. Anyway (get to the point), the only reason I have stopped buying Amiga Format over the last few months is because the coverdisks were getting more and more disappointing. So nowadays, the deciding factor in whether I buy a magazine is how good the coverdisk is, so what I'm suggesting (at last!) is that we, the readers, should be given a choice as to whether we want the coverdisks, varying from month to month. So AMIGA POWER by itself would cost £1.95, and with the disk would cost £2.95. This idea has already been put into practice with Amiga Fun (the magazine can be bought separately, even though it is a load of rubbish!).

Keep up the good work with the mag,
Adam Baird, Harpenden

Dear AMIGA POWER,

I am writing to complain about the terrible organisation of this year's European Computer Entertainment Show, and the misleading information printed in your mag. Having travelled to Earls Court from Surrey with a friend, I was most surprised that Saturday's show was 'TRADE ONLY'. Since when have Saturday shows been trade only? Saturday is the only time when some people can attend because of work commitments or school. Apart from the disappointment of not being allowed in, I felt very embarrassed as I had brought a friend all this way for nothing.

We had wasted our train fares and our Saturday and this was all due to the wrong information printed in your magazine. You clearly stated that the show was open to the public between Friday 6th September and Sunday 8th September on page 13 (unlucky for me) of the September issue.

We were not the only people to be upset and angry about this, as several others were turned away by the security guard (who must have been quite fed up with it himself). So then, not only should AMIGA POWER accept some responsibility for this debacle, but also the CES organisers for arranging the show in this way without giving any prior warning. They, together with the companies who are stall holders should show more respect for the punters who pay their wages.

Yours faithfully,
Paul Elphick, Wallington. →

£50 SOFTWARE WINNER

Dear AMIGA POWER,

I have just bought your magazine, and can I just say that your reviews are extremely honest, and unlike most magazines you look at every detail to bring us the most accurate opinions around. Enough praise though, the real reason I've put pen to paper to write this letter is because I've just bought a new Amiga after a year of C64 owning. What a move! And switching from Commodore Format to AMIGA POWER, mega move! (*Better not let the CF boys see this one -Ed*) Anyway, I've heard of these things called disk viruses, they worry me. I don't know what they are, what they do, who's responsible, or how to get rid of them. Every time I load a game I am worried about disk viruses. Hence, I am asking you what I should do, what I need to do to get rid of them, or even better, how do I prevent them?

Also, if I write a program, am I likely to be putting a disk virus there by accident? And what about Public Domain software, which I enjoyed on my C64, and cover mounted demos – are these free from disk viruses? Please help me, before I go mad! Maybe I'm making a mountain out of a molehill (or a virus out of a bug), but I'm concerned.

Yours faithfully,
Paul Allen, Thetford

First off, Paul, you're in no danger of 'accidentally' creating a virus when you program. Now, for you, Stuart Williams of Cornwall, and several others, here's the story on viruses. Viruses are programs written by sad little people in order to make lots of other little people sad too, just like them. They are programs which duplicate themselves onto your disks while the disks are in your Amiga's disk drive (the virus code lives in the Amiga's memory after you unwittingly load up a disk containing a virus), and after a certain period (usually after duplicating themselves a set number of times) they 'come to life', either printing messages on screen, wiping disks, crashing the machine, or doing any of a number of other destructive acts.

Happily, there are a number of things you can do to prevent viruses spreading, the safest of which is to always switch your Amiga's power off for at least 30 seconds before you load a game. You can also write-protect your disks (move the little black tab so that you can see through the hole) which stops the virus from transferring itself to that disk, or you can check all your disks with a virus-checker (various versions of these are available commercially or in the Public Domain) before using them. If you do get a virus, then you can get rid of it by using a virus killer (usually part of the virus checker program), but beware, if you use a virus killer on professional games, it may mistake their special bootblocks for viruses, and kill them instead, making the disks unusable. As for PD and magazine demos, most PD companies make sure their disks are virus-free before sending them out, as do magazines, so you shouldn't have any problems there. Basically though, if you always switch the power off between loads, you should never have any virus trouble. Hope this sets your mind at rest.

DO THE write THING

Now hold on a minute, Paul. I can quite understand your being miffed at not getting into the show (although as it happens you didn't miss much – it was crap), but you're a touch confused when it comes to laying the blame. When we ran the CES story in our news pages, it was completely correct. The decision to abandon the consumer side of the show was taken by the organisers (EMAP Exhibitions) after the issue went to print, so there was absolutely nothing we could do about it.

The main reason the public side of the show was pulled was because not enough software companies were bothering to show up, so directing your anger at the ones who DID have stands there is also way off the mark. The responsibility for the debacle, as you put it, lies squarely at the door of the organisers, for staging the wrong sort of show at the wrong time of the year – even if you had managed to get in you would have hated it for being so small.

What we suggest (of course) is that you come along to the World Of Commodore show in November instead – not only is it DEFINITELY a public event, it's about eight or nine times as large as the CES and is 100 percent Amiga too. (But of course, if you've read this issue you'll know about it already).

Dear Sir,

I am a compulsive reader of your magazine and would not miss it for the world. I used to get The One, but no more. To get to the point, though, I'd like to say a bit more on the issue of complete games on magazines. The two games I got off your first two issues were the first full games I've had for my Amiga for over a year. I thought 'Great, a way of getting good games without paying through the nose', but then what happens? ELSPA (the Nazis of the computer world – let's hope they don't start burning the magazines next) stick their noses in and stop them. So people like me, and believe me there are lots of others like me, have to go back to PD games. You see, people like us don't matter to them, all they care about is money, money and more money. I mean, we can't take the caviar out of their mouths, can we?

Yours faithfully,
J. Noble, Whitby.
P.S. Stuart Campbell's great, OK?

Hello AMIGA POWER!

Well, after four issues, I decide to write to you and voice a few of my opinions/gripes about you and related subjects. I bought your first issue after reading the blurb and took out a sub immediately. Reason? I thought it was great! Mind you, now I'm not so sure...

I take it that most of the staff must be on holiday and there is a lack of interesting stories to print? I mean, who really wants to read yet another magazine doing the film tie-in report? Next you'll be doing a bloody joystick test! Do all you mags pass on these stories and print them when you can't find anything better?

Now, the full games on disks argument. To be honest, most of the stuff that has been put out so far is real crap stuff that won't be missed. I like the old games and the PD but obviously you are limited by availability of decent material. What about some *Speedball 2* goals of the month or similar? My main reason for writing this letter though, is not to moan about your mag. What really made me write was the Autumn Preview. If that is a cross section of what's to come in the world of software then God help us!

I've had an Amiga since '89 and I reckon the software houses are getting worse. The majority of them show no imagination. Why must we continually have age-old game ideas revamped with a few extra frills? *The Executioner* is a prime example, old 8-bit game with a new but ridiculous storyline. The software scene is packed with *Thrust*, platform, arcade adventures, but you can count the good games on one hand. Please, software houses, spend more time on 'game idea' development and less on thinking up some mind-boggling crap story line for an age old game.

Yours faithfully,
D. Bragg, Leamington Spa

Actually, D., you'd be surprised at the number of people who've written in actually asking us to do a joystick test... I guess you just can't please all the people all of the time. As for the disk idea, Speedball 2 *goals might well be interesting, but only to people who already own* Speedball 2. *At AMIGA POWER, we try to make sure that our disks can be used completely by all our readers. Even putting that aside, I think it's a bit of a dubious concept. You'd watch them once, go 'Ooh, that was a nice goal', then never bother again. What do other readers think?*

Dear AP,

Disappointing, very disappointing. I refer, of course, to your continued indulgence of the ubiquitous Stuart Hardy. To be honest I expected a little more from a publication which, to my mind at least, has quickly established itself as by far the best Amiga games magazine on the market.

I mean, I can understand why some of the lesser, lack lustre Amiga mags publish Mr Hardy's intensely dull missives, but AMIGA POWER?! Come on, you set yourselves up as ground-breaking and somewhat radical, and yet you succumb, along with your rivals, to printing Mr Hardy's treatises on such novel and never-discussed topics as the size of software boxes and how the recession is affecting the software retail market (the latter being a particularly redundant topic – how the hell do you think a recession will affect the market?)

Sorry to harp on (my, am I in a negative mood!), but not only is the subject matter of his widely distributed letters well worn and predictable, but the delivery is so pedestrian and earnest (literate, possibly, but so is the back of a cornflakes box, and I know which I find more interesting).

It's time to do yourselves, your readers and most importantly Mr Hardy a favour by not printing any more of his yawns (crap pun, sorry), thereby discouraging him to do something a little more constructive with his life (such as going out, making friends, getting drunk and all that good stuff). Anyway, griping over.

Yours
Paul Connolly, London SE19.
PS Despite the temptations of irony I have not sent a version of this letter to any other magazine.

Blimey, Paul, that's fighting talk where we come from! Don't you think you're (just maybe) getting a little carried away? You may find Stuart's letters a little annoying, but surely not enough to inspire such vitriol? Does anyone want to leap to Stuart's defense, perhaps? Anyway, in the interests of irony of course, there was only one possible way we could follow this letter...

Dear Sir,

While reading the 'And another thing...' column in Issue 6 of AMIGA POWER magazine, I noticed with interest the comments made by Adrian Pannett concerning a games opinion page. Therefore I would like to say a little about Anco's footy game *Player Manager*.

Without a doubt, *Player Manager* is one of my favourite games of all time! I use the realistic 'in position' game style, preferring to see my team do some of the work, although others may prefer the more arcade variation. A randomising feature brings us an unlimited number of players, each one an individual with a long list of attributes. As well as in-game skills (shooting, passing etc), these attributes also include such things as Height, Weight, Ability and Aggression. These attributes aren't just for show, though – they DO actually influence how the players will act while on the pitch.

Every new season and everyone will be older. Although old players will rapidly deteriorate, a young signing (if given the proper training) will improve and hopefully become a future star player. The transfer market is the liveliest I've ever seen, so much in fact that a player may be for sale one week and gone the next! Transferring a player will reduce his morale (unless he requests it!) but interested clubs will haggle to gain the best deal. I like to watch the matches in full, although there is an option to see an accelerated version or the result only.

Long-term interest is maintained due to the time factor. No player lasts forever, but new arrivals will change the style of your team to ensure each match is different, no matter how many you play or watch! My only complaint is that putting on sub No14 will usually add 15 (false) goals to his score sheet – very annoying for someone like me who enjoys keeping notes on each sessions top scorers! All in all, an excellent game – the more you put in, the more you get out.

Yours faithfully,
Stuart N. Hardy
PS This letter is unique, I have now erased it from memory!

Well, people? Now you've seen an example of it, do you think having a section where you write your own little reviews of games is a good idea? Anyone who does, send your review of a recent(ish) game you feel particularly strongly about, less than 200 words please, to 'You got it all wrong!', AMIGA POWER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Dear Amiga Power,

I'd like to complain about your coverdisk on issue six. When I removed the coverdisk, the magazine cover did not rip. Can you ever realize how depressed this had made me. All my other copies of AMIGA POWER have that fantastic rip right across them, and sometimes even on the back page. But this one does not. I tried to get the sellotape to rip the cover, but it just doesn't work.

I've tried to get the same look using scissors, but it just doesn't look the same. Please in future could you stick the disk down with industrial strength tape so that it rips the cover. If you want to produce another issue which doesn't rip the cover I might even stop buying the magazine. Or something like that anyway.

Anyway, I'd also just like to say that the actual coverdisk was really good. The colour scheme, the yellow label on the blue disk, was an excellent choice and the pictures on the label were very interesting as well.

Thanks for listening,
Alex Finch, Reigate, Surrey.

Comedians. We love 'em. And that's all we've got time for this month, folks. As always, send your opinions, suggestions, rants and so on to the address on the previous page. Even if you don't win a prize, we may still print your letter, or you may get your name in this bit... ●

AND ANOTHER THING...

- Iron out inconsistencies in the Bottom Line, eg two games with the same review score getting different numbers of stars, says Leon Calvert of Slough.
- Print a chart or table which mentions the marks given to games by your competitors, suggests Didier Wittesaele of Brussels. It'll spare us from having to buy everyone else's crappy mags.
- Steve Nicholls of Swindon feels that surely the Bitmaps could have managed to squeeze some kind of animated end sequence into *Gods*, but at least he's glad that unlike other mags, he's sure AMIGA POWER wouldn't print level codes for the game (since they're unique to each individual copy). Too right, Steve! (On both counts).
- Carl Wesley of Stockport wonders if anyone out there's ever thought what a good game the role-playing adventure *Stormbringer* would make on the Amiga? Has Sean M. heard of it?
- 'What's an analogue joystick?', asks Daniel Maharry of Westbrook. Well, Daniel, it's a stick which registers not only direction of movement but also the size of that movement, allowing for much greater control precision. Unfortunately though, they're not currently usable on Amigas, although Suncom are working on a converter which allows PC analogue joysticks to be used.
- Stuart N. Hardy (!!) of Sheffield would like to see a computer yearbook similar to the Guinness Book Of Records produced, with up-to-the-minute information on software houses, lists of labels, complete software histories, information on future projects, programmer interviews and lots of stuff like that. We suggested it to Mark and he ran out of the room screaming and hasn't come back. Thanks, Stuart.
- And finally, Karen Eliot of Edinburgh just wants to say 'Hi' to everyone on the team. Hi, Karen.

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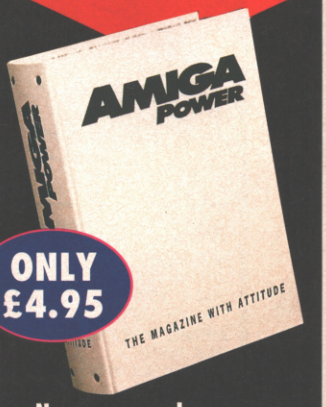

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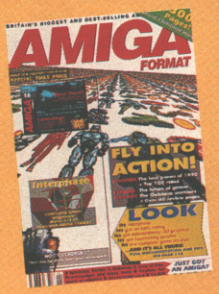

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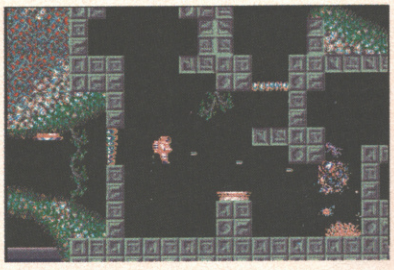
We presented an excellent playable demo on last month's cover disk, now here's your chance to get completely embroiled in the fascinating world of Audiogenic's incredible *Exile*, the future of arcade adventures.

AP rated at 89 per cent.



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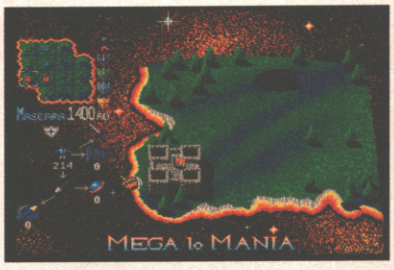
This month's highest rating game, the incredible *Mega lo Mania* from Image Works, makes the 'god-sim' genre more accessible than ever before. Fast, engrossing gameplay, hilarious sound and an incredible hook factor make it perhaps the most unputdownable game of the year!

AP rated 90 per cent



SWITCHBLADE II

Gorgeous pseudo-Japanese graphics, wonderful scrolling and playability coming out of its ears – that's Gremlin's simply stunning *Switchblade II*, perhaps the Amiga's best ever arcade-style platform game.

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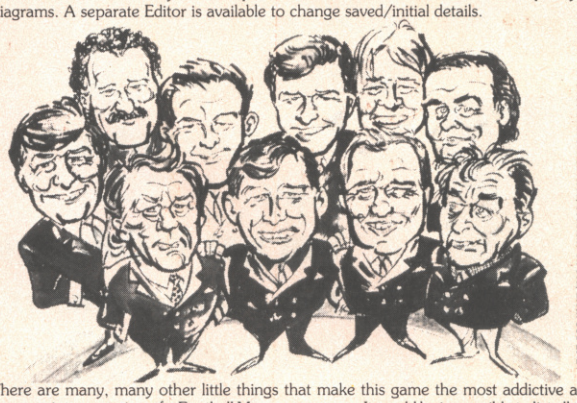

ESP Software, 32a Southchurch Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 2ND.

There are many, many other little things that make this game the most addictive and accurate interpretation of a Football Managers season. It would be impossible to list all the features in this advert but we assure you that this is the best. We have thousands of satisfied customers from our previous edition of this game, many are still playing it 18 months after purchase. See the order form below for details on how to order this incredible game. Available for all Atari ST's and Amiga's. PC version coming soon.

Please note 512K versions will not include some features listed above.

WRESTLING MASTERS

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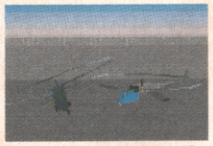
AFRIKA KORPS
Impressions £29.99

Uppers – Intelligent opponents set it apart from the standard wargame. ***Downers*** – But not enough to give it any flair. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just because it's a wargame, it doesn't mean it has to be this primitive. ★

AH37-M THUNDERHAWK
Core £30.99



Uppers – The fastest, slickest 3D graphics yet to grace the Amiga. ***Downers*** – The lack of real sim elements may put some off, and the mouse control is a bit unwieldy. ***The Bottom Line*** – A brilliantly executed arcade-simulation crossover, which captures the frenetic helicopter feel quite excellently. ★★★★★

ALPHA WAVES
Infogrames £25.99

Uppers – Nice 3D bouncing romp. Bizarre, but endearing. ***Downers*** – It tends to feel like an executive toy, and a very expensive one at that. ***The Bottom Line*** – A novel diversion but no great shakes. ★★

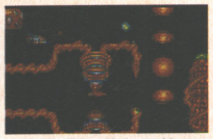
AMIGA ENCOUNTER
Novagen £20.42

Uppers – Very fast and atmospheric. ***Downers*** – It's just *Battlezone* yet again. Incredibly thin gameplay for a full-price 16-bitter. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good old-fashioned zooming' n' blasting fun, but it really should have been a budget game. ★★★

ARMOUR-GEDDON
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – Lots of tanks, lots of planes, lots of places to go. It's deep and wide and tall (and good-looking to boot). ***Downers*** – Takes a lot of self-discipline to play properly. ***The Bottom Line*** – A natural successor to *Carrier Command*, and – it has to be said – a worthy one too.★★★★

ARMALYTE
Thalamus £25.99



Uppers – Enjoyable in an old-fashioned sort of way. ***Downers*** – Sloppily presentation and inadequate design. ***The Bottom Line*** – Totally eclipsed by Activision's *R-Type II*. ★★

ARNHEM
CCS £19.95

Uppers – A 8-bit classic wargame finally brought to Amiga owners. ***Downers*** – ...but nobody really wanted it anyway. ***The Bottom Line*** – Primitive beyond belief – even wargamers should give it a wide berth. ★

A-10 TANK KILLER
Dynamix (Sierra) £35.75

Uppers – A wealth of typical flight sim-style detail, and a genuine feeling of taking part in a major conflict. ***Downers*** – Gameplay suffers due to the sluggish frame rate and lack of a real flying 'feel'. ***The Bottom Line*** – A interesting but flawed attempt at taking the flight simulation genre a stage further. ★★★

ATOMINO
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – Easy to pick up, with thousands of levels to keep you going. ***Downers*** – Can covalent bonding be fun? We're not sure. Rather samey; very tough; crap music. ***The Bottom Line*** – Slightly similar to *Pipe Mania* in some ways – if you liked that, try this. ★★★

BACK TO THE FUTURE PART III
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Variety, neat animation, some decent jokes. ***Downers*** – But film licences nearly always feel too thin to be worth 25 quid... ***The Bottom Line*** – ...and this one's no different. Fun but slight. ★★★

BADLANDS
Tengen (Domark) £19.99

Uppers – A close conversion... ***Downers*** – ...of a crap overhead-view arcade race game. ***The Bottom Line*** – So workmanlike its jeans hang over its arse. ★★

THE BALL GAME
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Based on the excellent but un-released *Infection* puzzle game. ***Downers*** – The concept is spoiled by senseless changes to the rules. ***The Bottom Line*** – Interesting, but ineptly executed. ★★

THE BARD'S TALE III – THIEF OF FATE
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – A satisfying bout of monster bashing to appeal to the usual *Bard's Tale* mob. ***Downers*** – New ideas and fancy programming are sadly lacking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Monumentally unspectacular, but kinda nice all the same. One for the hardened D&D freak. ★★★

B.A.T.
Ubi Soft £29.99

Uppers – Intergalactic intrigue in a novel interactive comic book style. ***Downers*** – Perhaps a little too left-of-centre for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – Very different, and actually very good. ★★★

BATTLE CHESS II – CHINESE CHESS
Electronic Arts £25.99

Uppers – Cute graphics, and a new angle on the chess theme. ***Downers*** – The animations soon become tiresome, and Chinese chess isn't half as interesting as the standard game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good as a showpiece, but a failure as a piece of playable software. ★★

BATTLE COMMAND
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Loads of missions, atmospheric solid 3D graphics (ie lots of green), plus a good mix of strategy and blasting. ***Downers*** – Takes a while to get into; some odd (and impossible to complete) missions. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got the self-discipline to persevere past an uninspiring start, this is a worthy follow-up to the classic *Carrier Command*. ★★★

BEAST BUSTERS
Activision £25.99

Uppers – Graphically close to the original. ***Downers*** – Slows down when there's a lot happening, and it's far too easy. ***The Bottom Line*** – Doesn't compare too well with all the other *Op Wolf* games on the Amiga. ★★

BIG BUSINESS
Magic Bytes £25.99

Uppers – Well-programmed and a fairly original concept. Would you believe, a 'humorous business simulation'? ***Downers*** – It's true, though the humour is feeble-witted stereotyping, and the business part is tedious number-crunching. ***The Bottom Line*** – Some nice touches, but at the end of the day it just isn't any fun to play at all. ★★

BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE
Capstone (Accolade) £24.99

Uppers – In our humble opinion, a most excellent subject for a licence. The game even manages to capture some of the flavour of the bodacious film too. ***Downers*** – But that doesn't stop it being a strong contender for the 'Weakest Gameplay In The World' award. ***The Bottom Line*** – Something of a missed opportunity. Let's hope for better things if they make a game of the film sequel... ★★

BILLIARDS II SIMULATOR
Infogrames £25.99

Uppers – Plenty of variations, including 'crazy pool' with an octagonal table. ***Downers*** – Neither the 2D or 3D modes allow a decent shot to be made, and the 'feel' of the sport is lost completely. ***The Bottom Line*** – Another game which crumbles in the face of its competition, this time in the form of *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*. ★★

BLADE WARRIOR
Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Pretty breathtaking graphics, with plenty of action and puzzling too. ***Downers*** – The gameplay is unlikely to be to everyone's taste. ***The Bottom Line*** – Possibly the most atmospheric game ever. ★★★★

BLUE MAX
Mindscape £34.99

Uppers – Less techie than most flying thangs. Some rather spiffing sound compliments the WWI feel nicely. ***Downers*** – Not a winner in the user-friendliness stakes, and the slow and sloppy main game never (ahem) really takes off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dull. *Not* the definitive bi-plane game for Biggles buffs it should have been. ★

BOTICS
Krisalis £19.99

Uppers – Nice sound; futuristic graphics. ***Downers*** – Absolutely dire *Pong*-style gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Get the hell out of here! ★

BRAT
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Very pretty, very smooth, very challenging. ***Downers*** – ...and very, very irritating indeed, especially if you hate the central character. ***The Bottom Line*** – Okay if you play it with the sound off. ★★★

BREACH 2
Impressions £24.99

Uppers – Stick with it and you'll find an immensely rewarding space/strategy blast with loads of levels. ***Downers*** – Scrappy graphics and some awkward quirks will deter many. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loved *Laser Squad*? Then you'll probably take a shine to *Breach 2*. ★★

BRIGADE COMMANDER
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Desert Storm scenarios give it a nice touch of topicality. ***Downers*** – The usual crap graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – Friendlier than the average wargame, and more playable too. ★★★

CADAVER
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Gorgeously atmospheric graphics; a good mix of puzzling and hacking. ***Downers*** – One or two irritating moments and it's all a bit lacking in the excitement department. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice blend of 3D graphics and adventuring (but it's not a classic). ★★★

CADAVER – THE PAYOFF
Renegade £16.99

Uppers – A wonderful add-on for fans of the first *Cadaver*. ***Downers*** – Not a lot of use for anyone else though. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got the original, this isn't such a bad price to pay for more of the same. ★★★

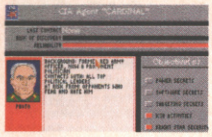
THE CARDINAL OF THE KREMLIN
Accolade £24.99

Uppers – Reasonably captivating and accessible strategy. ***Downers*** – Ridiculous arcade sequence dropped slap bang in the

Welcome to what may well prove to be the last Bottom Line in its current form – try as we might, the battle to cram a full year's games into a mere eight pages is one we've been gradually losing (we're currently down to the last ten months or so) so as of next issue we're going to go up a page size – to a full seven pages. (Mark, who puts The Bottom Line together each month may complain, but it can't really be helped). Back to this month, and our constantly updated guide boasts a good number of new entries, the best being Delphine's *Cruise For A Corpse*, Gremlin's *Utopia*, Storm's cutsie *Rodland*, and two MicroProse games, *Silent Service II* and *Flames Of Freedom*...

THE BOTTOM LINE

RATINGS: ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire



middle of the game almost totally destroys the atmosphere. ***The Bottom Line*** – Alarmingly stupid design blows what could have been a winner. ★★

CARTHAGE
Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Excellent graphics and some nifty arcade sequences from the masters of slick programming. ***Downers*** – But underneath it's a distinctly average strategy game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Despite appearances, not one for the joystick junkies out there. ★★★

CENTURION
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Fairly interesting management sections with some nifty battle sequences. ***Downers*** – Two appalling arcade sections blow its chances. ***The Bottom Line*** – Unbalanced. ★★

CHALLENGE GOLF
On-Line £24.99

Uppers – Easy to get into, and up to four players catered for. ***Downers*** – Mind-numbingly unrealistic putting sequence, and loads of unnecessary little bugs. ***The Bottom Line*** – Lack of playability makes this a seriously below-par golf sim. Go for *PGA Tour Golf* instead. ★

CHAMPION OF THE RAJ
Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Arcade sequences break up the heavy-duty strategy action. ***Downers*** – Even more ridiculous disk accessing than usual in this type of thing. Crap programming generally. ***The Bottom Line*** – Potentially good game ruined by complete lack of playability. ★

CHAOS IN ANDROMEDA
On-Line £24.99

Uppers – Lots of character interaction and plenty to do. ***Downers*** – Crap fight sequences and tiny graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – Enjoyable *Ultima*-style adventure slightly spoiled by sloppy programming. Still good fun though. ★★★

CHAOS STRIKES BACK
Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – Complex and ingenious puzzles; very user friendly; great sound. ***Downers*** – Slightly old fashioned looking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Engrossing role playing adventure using the *Dungeon Master* game system. ★★★★

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE
Impressions £29.99

Uppers – Visually impressive wargame, with instant appeal and plenty of user-friendly presentation. ***Downers*** – Things fall down in the wargaming aspect of things, with some rather silly rules. ***The Bottom Line*** – A very brave try, but it doesn't quite reach the heights to which it aspires. ★★★

CHUCK ROCK
Core Design £24.99

Uppers – A first class caveman romp, with some innovation in the gameplay for once. ***Downers*** – A touch shallow and a touch easy. ***The Bottom Line*** – Pretty brilliant platformer, one of the Amiga's very best. ★★★★

CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER 2.0
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – A veritable air force of planes to fly, with piles of options, missions and the obligatory load of external views. There's even the opportunity to fly the Space Shuttle. ***Downers*** – A complete lack of speed, bad disk access and naff perspective put the dampers on the whole affair. ***The Bottom Line*** – Low flying flight sim – fails to stay with the competition. ★★★

CHIP'S CHALLENGE
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Lots and lots of levels; typically well thought out console-style gameplay. ***Downers*** – Simplistic graphics; lack of depth. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good, but not the most characterful of puzzle games, and not the cheapest either. ★★★

COHORT
Impressions £29.99

Uppers – (Relatively) excellent graphics and helpful user-interface make things accessible. ***Downers*** – The game is not without flaws, and the controls system isn't as good as it should be. ***The Bottom Line*** – A fine off-beat wargame, but overpriced. ★★

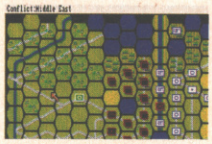
THE COLONEL'S BEQUEST
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Mildly intriguing whodunit, with that ever so familiar Sierra style of presentation. ***Downers*** – Terrible graphics, hours of tedium. ***The Bottom Line*** – Overpriced and over here. Sierra can do much better than this. ★★

COMMANDO
Elite £19.99

Uppers – Lovingly recreated coin-op blast-'em scroller. The game that launched a thousand scrolling war blasters (*Mercs*, *Warzone* et al). ***Downers*** – As fashionable as an anorak. ***The Bottom Line*** – Classic stuff, but not a good indication of the Amiga's capabilities. ★★★

CONFLICT MIDDLE EAST
SSI/US Gold £30.99



Uppers – A wargame in the traditional sense, but executed very well indeed. ***Downers*** – The wargame label is no longer a valid excuse for a program looking so dated. ***The Bottom Line*** – Of limited interest, even to hardened wargamers. ★★★

COUGAR FORCE
Tomahawk £19.99

Uppers – The box is quite interesting (actually that's a bit of a lie). ***Downers*** – Everything. The sound, the graphics, the gameplay – all dire in the extreme. ***The Bottom Line*** – A perfect present for pyromaniacs. ★

CRIME DOES NOT PAY
Titus £25.95

Uppers – Er... reasonable(ish) graphics? ***Downers*** – Terrible gameplay, pathetic humour, atrocious design, useless plot... shall we go on? I think not. ***The Bottom Line*** – Crime doesn't pay. This game is a software crime, so work it out for yourself. ★

CRIME WAVE
US Gold £24.95

Uppers – Gore galore; the numerous video interludes spice it up a bit. ***Downers*** – The actual game is dull in the extreme, and the waiting between levels is monstrous. ***The Bottom Line*** – A bog-standard blast-'em-up with knobs on. ★

CRUISE FOR A CORPSE
Delphine/US Gold £27.99

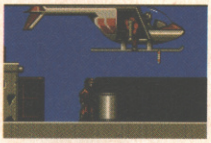
Uppers – Superbly-designed plot, lovely graphics, and the usual compulsive quality you expect from Delphine. ***Downers*** – Loads (and loads) of disk-accessing, and even when you've got the solution it seemingly takes eight hours to play it through to the end. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not flawless, but still an

absolutely lovely game, and a worthy companion to *Monkey Island*. ★★★★★

CYBERCON III
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Brilliant sense of 'being there', and better Freescape than Freescape. ***Downers*** – Predictably, not all that accessible to your average game player. ***The Bottom Line*** – Well worth the effort of getting into. ★★★★★

DARKMAN
Ocean £25.99



Uppers – The driving section is imaginative and fun. ***Downers*** – Everything else is hackneyed, licence-by-numbers rubbish. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not quite as bad as *Total Recall* and *Nightbreed*, but not very much better either. The worst film game for quite some time. ★★

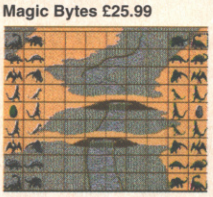
DAS BOOT
Mindscape £29.99

Uppers – The most accessible sub sim to date. ***Downers*** – ...but that still doesn't make it particularly accessible. ***The Bottom Line*** – Playable, but overpriced. The best in its field. ★★★

DEUTEROS
Activision £25.99

Uppers – An incredibly huge and absorbing game, with challenges that seem perfectly paced to be in tune with the developing game-skills of the average player. ***Downers*** – Visually it can be a bit of a yawn. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't be fooled by the strategy exterior – this is a game that everyone should try. ★★★★★

DINO WARS
Magic Bytes £25.99

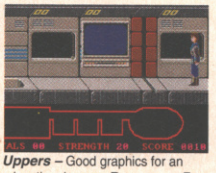


Uppers – A novel chess variant, including a great 'two players at once' option where you don't have to wait for the other player to move. ***Downers*** – The central beat-'em-up section is a bit crap, and the game as a whole is over-simplistic. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice idea, but asking £25 for it is a bit of a cheek – there just isn't enough to it. ★★

DISC
Loriciel £24.99

Uppers – A few nice graphical touches. ***Downers*** – Appallingly-designed gameplay with very little actual action. ***The Bottom Line*** – A crappy *Discs Of Tron* rip-off without most of the original's good features. ★

DISCOVERY
Micro Illusions £25.99



Uppers – Good graphics for an educational game. ***Downers*** – For a game which relies heavily on speech synthesis, the speech quality is terrible. ***The Bottom Line*** – Tricky to play and educationally dubious, this is a bit of a flop. ★★

DRAGON BREED
Activision £24.99

Uppers – A near perfect arcade conversion; niftily animated main dragon sprite. ***Downers*** – The zillionth sideways scrolling shoot-'em-up of last year. ***The Bottom Line*** – One instinctively knows when a conversion is right. ★★★★

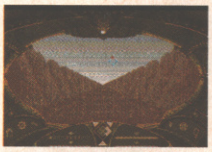
DRAGONS OF FLAME
SSI (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Almost instant playability – not something you'd expect from a role playing game. ***Downers*** – A bit simplistic for real Dungeons & Dragons fans. ***The Bottom Line*** – An excellent introduction to the new bread of fantasy RPGs. ★★★

DRAGON'S LAIR II
Readysoft £44.95

Uppers – Really incredibly gorgeous cartoon graphics. ***Downers*** – Minimal player interaction and a ridiculous price tag. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not the best value game in the world. ★★

ECO PHANTOMS
Electronic Zoo £25.99



Uppers – A nice line in H.G.Wells sci-fi theatrics and some unusual sub-sections give *Eco Phantoms* a highly original flavour. ***Downers*** – The parts don't actually add up to very much, and the copy protection system could induce bouts of violence. ***The Bottom Line*** – A reasonable 3D routine masquerading as a game. ★

EDD THE DUCK
Impulze £24.99

Uppers – *Rainbow Islands*-inspired gameplay ensures some level of interest. ***Downers*** – But the whole thing just doesn't inspire, and the difficulty is placed too high for a young audience. ***The Bottom Line*** – Your granny might buy you one. ★★

ELF
Ocean £25.39

Uppers – An excellent arcade adventure romp, with enough interesting little extras to make it fresh. ***Downers*** – These things are getting just a little bit old-fashioned, aren't they? ***The Bottom Line*** – A good solid game from the Ocean stable, but not a world beater. ★★★

ELVIRA – MISTRESS OF THE DARK
Accolade £24.99

Uppers – Elvira's gorgeous; the graphics really draw the player in. ***Downers*** – Pity the game itself is nigh on impossible – and it takes five disks! ***The Bottom Line*** – Falls apart due to disk swapping and infuriating gameplay. ★★

EMLYN HUGHES' ARCADE QUIZ
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Just like a pub quiz machine... ***Downers*** – ...but with Emlyn Hughes in it (and no real cash prizes). ***The Bottom Line*** – Oh dear. ★

ESWAT
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – As conversions go, it's not a complete nightmare... ***Downers*** – ...but let's be honest, the arcade original was duff, duff, duff. ***The Bottom Line*** – A reasonable conversion of a terminally average game. ★

EUROPEAN SUPERLEAGUE
CDS £24.99

Uppers – A surprisingly involving footy strategy thing in the *Football Manager* vein. ***Downers*** – They're not still making these things are they? ***The Bottom Line*** – A dated idea – it sounds tedious but it's actually executed quite commendably. ★★

EXILE
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Real-world physics incorporated into an arcade game; it's more of a true arcade adventure than most games bearing that tag. ***Downers*** – Rather primitive graphics, and not the most instantly playable game ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – A great arcade adventure, but not for you if you're an action fan. ★★★★★

EXTERMINATOR
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Very original (read 'very, very odd indeed') arcade thing, well converted to retain the original's feel. ***Downers*** – Confusing initially, but once you've played it for a while it's...confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great fun, but it doesn't really make it in the longevity stakes. ★★★

THE EXECUTIONER
Hawk £25.99

Uppers – A playable enough *Thrust*-variant, with one or two extra bits tacked on (such as the tasteful torture scenes). ***Downers*** – The

core of the game just isn't exciting or different enough to give *The Executioner* that 'one more go' appeal. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fine if you don't mind the slightly repetitive gameplay, and significant lack of action. ★★

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

SSI (US Gold) £29.99

Uppers – Takes *Dungeon Master* a step further. Excellent atmosphere and graphics. ***Downers*** – Despite being better than *DM*, it's not actually very different to it at all. ***The Bottom Line*** – The best D&D game yet for the Amiga. (Or, indeed, for anything else.) ★★★★★

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II

MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – Graphics to make you gasp, sound effects to get your adrenalin pumping and gameplay to leave you in a quivering heap on the floor. ***Downers*** – Despite the shoot-'em-up nature of things, it can all be a touch too much for the less ambitious games player. ***The Bottom Line*** – Quite possibly the last word in flight sims (so far, anyway). ★★★★★

FIGHTING SOCCER

Activision £24.99

Uppers – The coin-op was mildly amusing(ish). ***Downers*** – You are accused of producing an utterly dull game of the lowest calibre. How do you plead? ***The Bottom Line*** – Guilty as hell. ★

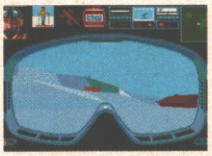
FINAL FIGHT

US Gold £25.99

Uppers – Context-sensitive controls, arcade-true graphics, generally an excellent conversion. ***Downers*** – Then again it's a conversion of a fairly dull formulaic coin-op. ***The Bottom Line*** – Technically impressive and loads of fun to play, this might even knock *IK+* off its 'best Amiga beat-'em-up' perch. (But then again it might not). ★★★★

FLAMES OF FREEDOM – MIDWINTER II

MicroProse £34.99



Uppers – There's loads to do, and the whole thing looks lovely. Hours of fun to be had from the character-designing section alone. ***Downers*** – Lots of stupid holes in the logic, and an uncomfortable balance between the strategy and action aspects. ***The Bottom Line*** – Works better in theory than in practice. *Midwinter* fans will love it, but the rest of us are likely to get very bored very quickly. ★★★★

FRENETIC

Core Design £20.99

Uppers – Fast and good-looking. ***Downers*** – You've seen this all before, and done rather more excitingly into the bargain. ***The Bottom Line*** – Slick programming only serves to make *Frenetic* tedious in a professional kind of a way. ★★

GALAXY FORCE II

Activision £24.99

Uppers – An ambitious attempt at a visually stunning coin-op. ***Downers*** – Everything else. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you know you can't do it why bother trying? ★

GARFIELD – THE WINTER'S TAIL

The Edge £24.99

Uppers – Brilliant Jim Davis graphics. ***Downers*** – Crappy Steve Davis gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – What a wasted licence. For die-hard fans only. ★

GAUNTLET III

US Gold £25.99

Uppers – A new angle on the arcade classic gives some novelty value, and makes proceedings sufficiently different this time around. ***Downers*** – The pace is ponderous, there aren't enough baddies, and the speech is badly missed. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fine, but it doesn't really live up to the legend that is *Gauntlet*. ★★★

GAZZA II

Empire £24.99

Uppers – Gazza doesn't actually appear in the game much. ***Downers*** – Juddering sprites, poor control (just like the man himself), terrible sound – take your pick. ***The Bottom Line*** – It's enough to reduce you to tears. ★

GEISHA

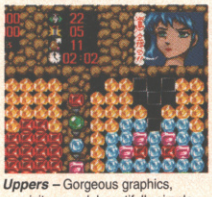
Tomahawk £25.99

Uppers – Um...you get to see some girls' bits. (Sorry, female readers). ***Downers*** – Tacky and fatuous 'plot', giving way to some of the most

unplayable sub-games ever, with presentation of a kind that people used to get arrested for. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could this be the worst full-price game ever reviewed in AP? A 5 percent mark would seem to suggest so... ★

GEM'X

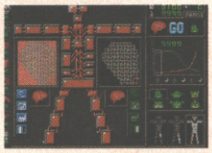
Demonware £24.99



Uppers – Gorgeous graphics, exquisite sound, beautifully simple mental torture. ***Downers*** – Won't change your mind if you're not into puzzlers. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the best puzzle games to date. ★★★★

GERM CRAZY

Electronic Zoo £25.99



Uppers – Not quite as expensive as Mindscape's *Life & Death*. ***Downers*** – But with little else in its favour. ***The Bottom Line*** – Another half-baked idea, not followed through properly. (Where do they all come from?) ★

GHENGHIS KHAN

Infogrames £39.99

Uppers – Stylish and fairly deep historical strategy game. ***Downers*** – Ridiculously expensive though, and requires a fair dose of manual reading. ***The Bottom Line*** – A bit of a cliché, but 'good if you like that sort of thing.' ★★★

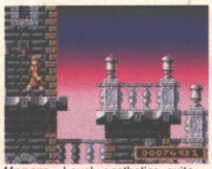
GHOST BATTLE

Thalion £25.53

Uppers – The sound's quite good and the graphics are okay. ***Downers*** – Everything else is utterly awful. ***The Bottom Line*** – Badly-designed and executed *Ghosts'n'Goblins* clone that's so bad it's scary. ★

GODS

Renegade £25.53



Uppers – Lovely aesthetics, quite involved for a platform game. ***Downers*** – Not quite as good as it's made out to be. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't believe the hype, but pretty damn good all the same. ★★★★★

GOLDEN AXE

Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Perfect arcade conversion, with every last feature implemented. ***Downers*** – There never really was a lot of variation in the gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Visually stunning, but not different enough to separate it from the usual beat-'em-up. ★★★

GRAND PRIX MASTER

Dinamic £19.95

Uppers – Endorsed by Jorge Martinez (apparently famous on the 80cc motorcycle circuit). ***Downers*** – Handles like a Reliant Robin. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not to put too fine a point on it, useless. ★

GUNBOAT

Accolade £29.99

Uppers – A sim which actually does something different. ***Downers*** – The action doesn't really convey enough excitement, and the graphics are a little on the primitive side. ***Bottom Line*** – A highly complex sim, this takes quite some time to get drawn into. ★★★

HALLS OF MONTEZUMA

Electronic Arts £25.99

Uppers – Almost unlimited lastability, thanks to the huge numbers of scenarios and variables. ***Downers*** – Off-puttingly complicated, and offers nothing new to the unconverted. ***Bottom Line*** – Well put together, but still strictly for diehards. ★★

HAMMERFIST

Vivid Image £24.99

Uppers – Graphically adept arcade adventure with tons of playability and plenty to keep you going. ***Downers*** – Iffy sound. ***The Bottom Line*** – Thoroughly enjoyable (if you like that sort of thing). ★★★

HARD DRIVIN' II

Tengen (Domark) £24.99

Uppers – Refined version of the original – less bugs, a track editor, a neat 'head-to-head' option if you link two machines... ***Downers*** – ...but still glitchy and not a patch on the arcade machine. ***The Bottom Line*** – Souped up, but not souped up enough. ★★

HEART OF THE DRAGON

Avatar Computing £25.99

Uppers – Lots of colours, and an (almost serious) attempt to do something new with the fantasy beat-'em-up. ***Downers*** – Beyond the almost impressive technical trickery lies not very much at all really. ***The Bottom Line*** – If your friend has bought it, give it a go. Then laugh very heartily at him. Entertaining in an embarrassing sort of way. ★

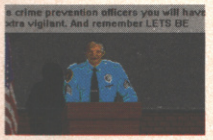
HERO QUEST

Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – Easy to get into, and deceptively addictive. You don't think you've been playing it for long, but suddenly it's Thursday and you're a week late for dinner. ***Downers*** – Not so good as a one-player game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Perhaps surprisingly, a highly entertaining game, and absolutely ideal when you've got game-playing friends round. ★★★★

HILL STREET BLUES

Krisalis £24.99



Uppers – A good feel for the TV series; characters (both player and others) that you can identify with. It's certainly an interesting way to handle a licence. ***Downers*** – Gets repetitive pretty quickly, and it's not the slickest game around. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good next step for someone who's played *Sim City* to death and fancies a new challenge. Limited appeal, though. ★★★

HORROR ZOMBIES FROM THE CRYPT

Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Unusual idea; suitably spooky graphics. ***Downers*** – But let down by the dull platform nature of the game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Funny to watch, but fairly average to play. ★★

HUNTER

Activision £25.99

Uppers – Stunning 3D graphics and loads to do. ***Downers*** – The odd little graphical glitch or two. ***Bottom Line*** – Enormously absorbing game – you'll find yourself completely captivated by it for hours on end. ★★★★★

HYDRA

Domark £24.99

Uppers – Um, nice moving-water effect. ***Downers*** – Terrible control feel; duff, unclear graphics; feeble gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – An almost-competent conversion of a useless game. ★

INDIANA JONES ADVENTURE

US Gold £19.99

Uppers – More fine-tuning gives *Indy* the friendliest control system yet. It's pretty faithful to the movie too! ***Downers*** – Waiting for Indy to trek across the screen all the time can get annoying and some of the puzzles are just a wee bit too abstract. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the very best Amiga adventures available. ★★★★

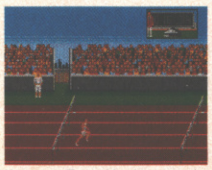
INDIANAPOLIS 500

Electronic Arts £24.95

Uppers – An immensely playable blend of true racing sim and quick track blast, with a nice line in remote camera views (if you've got a 1 meg machine). ***Downers*** – Track repetition hinders lasting appeal. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just fabulous. ★★★★★

INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETICS

Hawk £25.99



Uppers – Tons of fun for those who miss the days of joystick waggling. ***Downers*** – Terrible presentation, and a highly questionable price. ***The Bottom Line*** – If only it had been a tenner cheaper... ★★

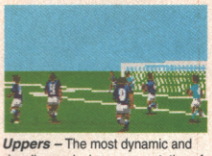
INTERNATIONAL SOCCER CHALLENGE

MicroProse £24.99

Uppers – Soccer in 3D? A very brave attempt to do something new with a tired old game-style... ***Downers*** – ...which unfortunately falls flat on its face. ***The Bottom Line*** – Foul. ★

I PLAY 3D SOCCER

Simulmondo £25.99



Uppers – The most dynamic and visually convincing representation of the sport yet. ***Downers*** – The realism is so high that you hardly ever get to kick the ball, and the 3D display system can be downright confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but ultimately flawed. ★★

IRON LORD

Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Cinemaware-style medieval epic with plenty of sub-games and atmospheric presentation. ***Downers*** – It's just too tough for most, and with little real depth. ***The Bottom Line*** – Ultimately repetitive, but fun for a while. ★★

ISHIDO

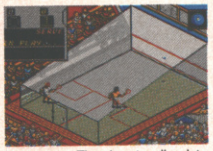
Accolade £24.99

Uppers – Take *Othello*, add some *Go*, then throw in a few herbs and spices and heat until brown. The result is one piping hot Chinese board game called *Ishido*. ***Downers*** – Irritating dialogue boxes, and the luck element can infuriate. ***The Bottom Line*** – An engaging piece of Chinese culture, which should really be played with a good strong cup of tea. ★★

JAHANGIR KHAN'S CHAMPIONSHIP SQUASH

Krisalis £25.53

Uppers – Easy to play, closely adheres to the rules of the real thing, and there's plenty of options on offer.



Downers – There's not really a lot you can do with a squash game, is there? ***The Bottom Line*** – The best squash game around for the Amiga. (Not that there's much in the way of competition). ★★★

JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER

Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Stunning 3D camera-style view on the action, and the actual rules and physical mechanics of the game are re-created beautifully. ***Downers*** – Well, it's still only snooker. Some extra stats would have been nice too. ***Bottom Line*** – A veritable corker. A classic. A 90 percenter. Need we say more? ★★★★★

JUDGE DREDD

Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Two ancient sub-games offer a real rave from the grave. ***Downers*** – Another *Judge Dredd* game screwed up totally. No humour, no graphics, no game. ***The Bottom Line*** – One day somebody will do justice (ahem) to the legend of Dredd. One day. ★

JUPITER'S MASTERDRIVE

Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Surprisingly playable race game. More fun than a packet of Jammy Dodgers. ***Downers*** – Unspectacular and overpriced. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not sure why, but it really is jolly good fun. ★★

KEEF THE THIEF

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellent hack, slash and puzzle solving with some superb stylised graphics. ***Downers*** – It still plays like your average role-playing adventure. ***The Bottom Line*** – Respectable Tolkien-esque fare. ★★★

THE KILLING CLOUD

Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Fast-moving and pretty graphics, bags of depth, and a great creation of atmosphere. ***Downers*** – Riddled with inconsistencies and badly-executed ideas. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could have been a contender, but badly lets itself down in the logic stakes.★★★

KING'S BOUNTY

New World Computing £25.99

Uppers – Accessible and tidily presented, and far more playable for the non-expert than anything in this

field we've seen. ***Downers*** – Nothing beyond the fact that some people won't ever get to grips with this sort of game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Superb D&D-style adventure that's fun for everyone but the most narrow of mind. ★★★★

LAST NINJA 2

System 3 £24.99

Uppers – Excellent 3D isometric graphics and a genuine attempt to inject some strategy into the martial arts genre. ***Downers*** – The game just isn't cohesive, and it plays like a pig. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not really in the Bruce Lee league (barely scraping Jackie Chan level to be honest). ★★

LANCASTER

Actual Screenshots £24.95

Uppers – Fairly impressive 3D polygon graphics. ***Downers*** – Lack of variation and any real excitement means it barely gets off the ground. ***The Bottom Line*** – Elevates averageness to an art form. ★★

LEISURE SUIT LARRY III

Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Ridiculous, over-sexed plot. Adventuring for consenting adults. ***Downers*** – Slightly obtrusive command parser, and as usual it's over-priced. ***The Bottom Line*** – Check it out – but only if you are over eighteen. ★★★

LEMMINGS

Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Utterly bizarre, pleasingly original and totally addictive. Invents a totally new category – the save-'em-up. ***Downers*** – As is the norm with such strikingly original concepts, some may wonder just what all the fuss is about. ***The Bottom Line*** – Love it or loathe it, you can't ignore it. *Lemmings* rule. ★★★★★

LIFE AND DEATH

Mindscape £25.53

Uppers – Excellent packaging (the surgical mask and gloves are wild), and some fairly amusing gameplay keeps things on the boil for a couple of hours. ***Downers*** – Repetition soon sets in – as a long-term challenge it all falls apart quite alarmingly. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's there is quite good, but there's just not enough of it. ★★

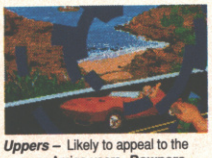
LINE OF FIRE

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Imagine all the Rambo films back-to-back on fast-forward, and you have a good idea how much violence this game contains. ***Downers*** – You also have a pretty good idea of how intelligent it is. ***The Bottom Line*** – An impossible arcade conversion proves totally and utterly impossible. ★★

LIVING JIGSAWS

Miles Computing £24.99



Uppers – Likely to appeal to the younger Amiga users. ***Downers*** – Unlikely to appeal to anybody else, anywhere. ***The Bottom Line*** – Lacks any charm whatsoever. Quite silly and pointless all round, really. ★

LOGICAL

Rainbow Arts £19.99

Uppers – The ease of play makes this a nicely accessible puzzler. ***Downers*** – But the amount of time each move takes also makes it a seriously tedious one. ***The Bottom Line*** – In a crowded world of puzzle games, *Logical* is very blunt in the mustard area. ★★

LORDS OF CHAOS

Blade £24.99

Uppers – Great control system, comprehensive and logical. Lots of levels equal great lastability. ***Downers*** – Very little action; not much compulsion to reach your rather abstract goal. ***The Bottom Line*** – A disappointing game from Julian Gollop, not up to his usual standard. Wait for *Laser Squad 2*. ★★★

LUPO ALBERTO

Idea £25.53

Uppers – Charming characters, a terribly translated manual, and goofy gameplay make it ideal for kids of all ages. ***Downers*** – The animation is funny for all the wrong reasons. Loveable but really rather crap. ***The Bottom Line*** – A game sure to cause argument. A case of try before you buy. ★★

MAGIC POCKETS

Renegade £25.99

Uppers – The usual Bitmap standards of technical excellence, and a veritable mountain of clever ideas. ***Downers*** – The graphics don't suit the game style, the design is too clever for its own good, and the pacing is hopelessly wrong. ***The Bottom Line*** – It'll sell a million, but everyone we've met finds it seriously boring. As a cute arcade platform game it's a disaster. ★★★

MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE

Krisalis £25.99

Uppers – Fast, pretty, and hugely playable. ***Downers*** – The strategy section is largely superficial (and what there is is optional). ***Bottom Line*** – Great control makes this just about the best football sim so far. ★★★★

MASTERBLAZER

Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellent two player mode, fast 3D action – all in all a respectable updating of the original future-sport game. ***Downers*** – Despite the new features, *Masterblazer* looks and feels dated. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun for a few hours, but too simplistic to hold any lasting appeal. ★★★

MAUPITI ISLAND

Lankhor £25.99

Uppers – Pleasantly different, and packed with loads of character interaction. ***Downers*** – Just too small to really justify the price. ***The Bottom Line*** –

Charming and interesting, but there just isn't enough of it. ★★★

MEGA LO MANIA

Image Works £30.99

Uppers – Brilliant sound effects, gorgeous speech, jolly nice graphics, completely compulsive gameplay. ***Downers*** – Perhaps just a tad frustrating at times. ***The Bottom Line*** – The most accessible and arguably the most enjoyable god-sim to date. ★★★★★

MEGA TRAVELLER 1

Empire £30.64

Uppers – Terrifying depth, friendly and helpful controls, great atmosphere, excellent balance of strategy and action. ***Downers*** – It might all seem a bit too familiar to *Elite* players; occasional long disk-access pauses can irritate. ***The Bottom Line*** – A wonderful piece of role-playing software that everyone should play at least once. After that, you're unlikely to want to stop. ★★★★★

MERCS

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Faithful conversion of the coin-op, good-looking and fast-moving... ***Downers*** – ...but still just another *Commando* clone. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great at what it does, but you're likely to want rather more from a game in this day and age. ★★★

METAL MUTANT

Silmarils £25.99

Uppers – A simple concept (exploration, fighting and puzzle solving) which works well, and has a perfect difficulty curve. ***Downers*** – Lacking any really exciting features, and too simple for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – A middle-of-the-road game, which achieves what it sets out to do, but doesn't really astound. ★★★

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Well-balanced gameplay with a smooth difficulty curve makes it stand out from a hundred similar coin-op conversions. Actually more playable than the arcade original. ***Downers*** – Control is awkward at first; could be a touch faster. ***The Bottom Line*** – Best of its type. ★★★

MIGHTY BOMB JACK

Elite £24.99

Uppers – Classic gameplay with added 16-bit features like, erm, power-ups. ***Downers*** – Sprawling levels lose the original's frantic urgency. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dull, dull, and then again dull. ★

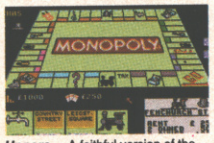
MIG-29

Domark £29.99

Uppers – So real you'll be be hanging pictures of Gorby on your wall. ***Downers*** – Only five missions, with little in the way of excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but ultimately too techie for most Amiga owners. ★★★

MONOPOLY

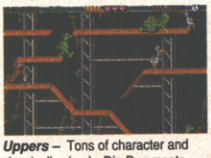
Leisure Genius £19.99



Uppers – A faithful version of the classic (to say the least) board-game. ***Downers*** – Who the hell wants to play a board-game on their computer anyway? ***The Bottom Line*** – Competently done, but arguably quite pointless. ★★

MONSTER BUSINESS

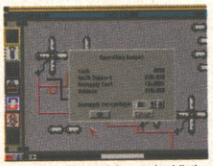
Eclipse £19.99



Uppers – Tons of character and classically simple *Dig Dug*-meets-*Snow Bros* gameplay make this endless fun for nostalgic arcade fans. Great music too, and a halfway-decent price tag. ***Downers*** – Once more, 'simple arcade fun' translates directly as 'shallow and transient kiddie rubbish' for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – A superb arcade platform game with more life in it than a hundred copies of *Magic Pockets*. ★★★★

MOONBASE

Mindscape £35.99



Uppers – Entertaining and addictive game in the best *Sim City* tradition. ***Downers*** – Just a bit too close to *Sim City* for comfort, though. ***Bottom Line*** – Fairly short-term entertainment, and more than a touch overpriced. ★★★

MOONSHINE RACERS

Millennium £24.99

Uppers: Erm, great hillbilly music. ***Downers:*** Slow, graphically horrible, totally derivative. ***The Bottom Line***: Almost as bad as Amiga *Chase HQ*, and you've got to admit that's pretty damn bad. ★

MUDS

Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Quite funny. ***Downers*** – Do we really need another rugby/basketball/ violence-based future sport? ***The Bottom Line*** – Giving everything silly names doesn't make this game different to the dozen others it's just the same as. ★★

MYSTICAL

Infogrames £24.99

Uppers – Fresh graphical approach to the the usual fantasy scenario. ***Downers*** – Really badly-thought-out two-player mode. ***The Bottom Line*** – An uninspired *Gauntlet* clone. ★★

'NAM

Domark £24.95

Uppers – Heavily researched, convincing and (dirty word) educational strategic war game. ***Downers*** – Very hard to win, the whole serious look to the thing could be a turn off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Political as well as tactical decision making gives a new dimension to war games. ★★★

NARC

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Great blood-spattering action; very close to the coin-op. ***Downers*** – Very dodgy on the playability front (not to say morally). ***The Bottom Line*** – Limited. ★★

NARCO POLICE

Dinamic £24.99

Uppers – Looks excellent. ***Downers*** – Computer takes a 'creative' attitude towards obeying control commands. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loud and action-packed blaster for expert commandos. ★★

NAVY SEALS

Ocean £25.39

Uppers – Quite good fun in a mindless arcade runaround sort of way. ***Downers*** – Technically unimpressive (to say the least), and there's very little to it. ***Bottom Line*** – Looks like an ST port, but if you can forget you paid £25 for it, it's pretty enjoyable. ★★

NEBULUS 2 – POGO A-GO-GO

21st Century Entertainment £25.99

Uppers – The winning formula of the original is at the core of the game. ***Downers*** – The addition of power ups ruins the beautiful simplicity which made the first such a classic. ***The Bottom Line*** – A real waste. This is the worst kind of sequel, one which just regurgitates the ideas of its predecssor, but in a far less playable way. ★★★★

NIGHT SHIFT

Lucasfilm (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Graphically innovative and full of character. ***Downers*** – Detail-packed background can make it hard to see where the actual platforms are; more time spent loading than playing. ***The Bottom Line*** – A few instructions would work wonders, but the game's overwhelming charm pulls it through. ★★★

NINJA WARRIORS

Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Novel 'Cinemascope'-esque screen layout. Dynamic Loading System is a boon but doesn't get rid of irritating swapping. ***Downers*** – Extremely repetitive action palls quickly. ***The Bottom Line*** – Even for a game of this type, the gameplay is too limited to hold the attention for any length of time. ★★

NITRO

Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Groovy graphics, smooth scrolling, excellent car-handling. ***Downers*** – A practically infinite-credit system means the game has little sense of urgency. You have to guess the course on later levels. ***The Bottom Line*** – Needs more in the way of

immediate danger to be addictive, but (unlike many similar games) is as fun in one player mode as with a couple of chums. ★★★

OBITUS
Psygnosis £34.99

Uppers – Intro would make a great Amiga *Deathchase* game. ***Downers*** – *Obitus* itself is a dull *Dungeon Master* rip-off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Boring and ridiculously priced. ★★

ONSLAUGHT
Hewson £24.99

Uppers – Lovely sound and music; lots of depth. ***Downers*** – Very confusing graphics and gameplay, and the main sequences are technically below the level of your average budget game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Caught between the two stools of wargaming and platform zap games, this isn't a very good example of either. ★★

OOOPS UP
Demonware £24.95

Uppers – Arcade fun in the *Pang*, er, 'tradition'. ***Downers*** – Colossally inferior to the real thing. ***The Bottom Line*** – The excellent sampled music isn't enough to save this bare-faced rip-off. Check out the real thing instead. ★★

OPERATION THUNDERBOLT
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Utterly mindless genocidal slaughterfest; perhaps the best *Op Wolf* style game to date. ***Downers*** – More of the coin-op's appeal is down to the cabinet-mounted Uzi than you might think, leaving the Amiga version somewhat 'flat'. ***The Bottom Line*** – Everything you could expect a conversion of *Operation Thunderbolt* to be. ★★★

PGA TOUR GOLF
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellently presented, comprehensive, and easy as pie to get into. ***Downers*** – There's a limited amount of scope to any golf game, and *PGA* doesn't even try to transcend it. ***The Bottom Line*** – The pinnacle of Amiga golf so far. ★★★★★

PICK'N'PILE
Ubi Soft £19.99

Uppers – Fascinating mix of *Puzznic* and *Boulder Dash*. ***Downers*** – 8-bit graphics don't help visual clarity any. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not enough variation to sustain it for long. ★★

POLICE QUEST 2
Sierra (Activision) £34.95

Uppers – Er, very realistic sim of a policeman's lot. ***Downers*** – ie half the game is form-filling. ***The Bottom Line*** – Too much like a tedious day at the office. ★★

POPULOUS
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Totally unique gameplay and smooth 3D isometric graphics add up to a game with depth and sparkle. ***Downers*** – The icon control system really is very confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – An essential for all open-minded Amiga owners. ★★★★★

THE POWER
Demonware £24.99

Uppers – Heaps of levels and a screen designer keep lasting appeal up, and the music is excellent. ***Downers*** – A touch derivative, and lacks that indefinable something that makes a puzzle game great. ***The Bottom Line*** – Try before you buy, you might like it, but rather average to our eyes. ★★★

POWER DRIFT
Activision £19.99

Uppers – All the arcade's tracks, characters, and secret features. ***Downers*** – The graphics can get very confusing, and the gameplay isn't really that close to the original. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good stab at a very difficult conversion, but not quite good enough. ★★★

POWERMONGER
Electronic Arts £29.99

Uppers – The brave new face of wargames... ***Downers*** – ...which looks suspiciously like *Populous*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Despite similarities to a certain other title, *Powermonger* really is an excellent game in its own right. ★★★★

PP HAMMER AND HIS PNEUMATIC WEAPON
Demonware £25.53

Uppers – Nicely old-fashioned platform action. Plenty of scope for double entrendres too. ***Downers*** – Annoying niggles and a tendency towards over-complication spoil it a bit. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good, but it could easily have been a lot better. ★★★

PREHISTORIK
Titus £25.53

Uppers – Some excellent cartoon graphics and humorous touches make it an instantly likeable game. ***Downers*** – Suffers in comparison to *Toki* and *Chuck Rock*. Needs a number of rough edges polishing up. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice enough little caveman romp, but it's not really an essential purchase. ★★★

PREDATOR 2
Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Lots and lots of zapping to be done and, er, that's about it really. ***Downers*** – Poor colour choice, unimaginative gameplay, bad control feel. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not as good as *Operation Wolf*, and now some £18 more expensive. Don't bother. ★★

PRINCE OF PERSIA
Broderbund £24.99

Uppers – Phenomenal animation, loads of atmosphere and some good old-fashioned gameplay. ***Downers*** – Control is initially tricky, and getting sent to the start of a level every time you die is always annoying. ***The Bottom Line*** – Technically stunning and great fun at the same time. Why can't all games be like this? ★★★★★

PROFLIGHT
Hi Soft £39.95

Uppers – Terrifyingly accurate – possibly the most accurate flight simulator ever. ***Downers*** – Such a good simulator that there isn't really room for any game at all. ***Bottom Line*** – Miles too realistic to be any fun to play. Still, it's less expensive than a real flying lesson. ★★

PRO TENNIS TOUR 2
Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Possibly the most realistic sports sim to grace the Amiga, with features galore. ***Downers*** – So if you hate the real thing, you won't go for this. ***The Bottom Line*** – Nothing short of wonderful. ★★★★

PURSUIT TO EARTH
Exocet £19.95

Uppers – Reminiscent of *Gyruss*, the classic arcade zapper. ***Downers*** – But completely crap. ***The Bottom Line*** – About as much fun as getting hit by a real Exocet. ★

PUZZNIC
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Classically simple and very addictive, not to mention original. ***Downers*** – Infuriatingly tough on later levels. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't be put off by the useless graphics, this is a wonderful brain teaser. ★★★★

QUEST FOR GLORY II – TRIAL BY FIRE
Sierra £40.85

Uppers – Sorry, can't think of any. Oh no, wait, you do get lots of disks for your money. ***Downers*** – But no game to put on them. Incompetently programmed, dreadfully-designed, staggeringly-overpriced trash. ***The Bottom Line*** – Possibly the worst Amiga game you will ever see. Avoid it like an bad-tempered tiger with toothache. ★

RAILROAD TYCOON
MicroProse £29.99

Uppers – Frightening amount of depth. ***Downers*** – Very slow to get into (and very slow even when you *do* get into it). ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got a lot of time to invest in it, well worth a look. ★★★★

RALLY CROSS CHALLENGE
Anco £19.95

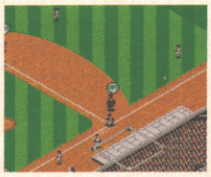
Uppers – Well-programmed *Super Sprint* clone that's great fun with multiple players. ***Downers*** – Limited lastability. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still one of the best in its field, but that's more down to lack of competition than anything else. ★★

RANX
Ubi Soft £24.99

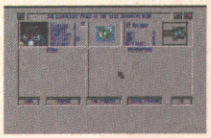
Uppers – Totally ideologically unsound. ***Downers*** – Totally ideologically unsound. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brilliantly-presented but ultimately limited comic strip beat-'em-up. Ideologically unsound. ★★

RBI TWO BASEBALL
Domark £29.99

Uppers – Excellent simulation of baseball, and beautifully presented to boot. ***Downers*** – Over-priced and not all that hot on lasting appeal. ***Bottom Line*** – Very good, but a bit limited, and not quite a classic. ★★★★



RENEGADE LEGION INTERCEPTOR
SSI/US Gold £24.99



Uppers – Military hardware a-go-go gives it instant RPG appeal. ***Downers*** – The strategy isn't deep enough, and the action sequences are way out of date. ***The Bottom Line*** – Tales of galactic empires and warfare are a good idea, but this one just falls flat. ★

REVELATION
Krisalis £19.99

Uppers – Neat idea – a puzzle game based on safe cracking. ***Downers*** – Too complex to just pick up and play – bad news for a puzzler. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not bad, but could have been better presented (and who thought up that utterly meaningless name?) ★★

ROBOCOP 2
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Great graphics, generally excellent presentation. ***Downers*** – Awkward controls, some infuriating gameplay traits, and it's all a touch too formulaic. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could have been a good deal better. ★★★

ROBIN HOOD
Millennium £25.99

Uppers – Witty and cheerful game that makes you love it almost in spite of itself. ***Downers*** – Tiny graphics can get irritating, and there are lots of silly little quirks. ***The Bottom Line*** – Likeable game that's a long way short of classic status, but damn good fun all the same. ★★★★

RODLAND
Storm £25.99

Uppers – Too-cute-to-be-true graphics, wonderful presentation, a near-perfect arcade game in the traditional sense. ***Downers*** – If you're looking for depth and complexity, look somewhere else. ***The Bottom Line*** – A magnificent conversion that actually improves significantly on the original coin-op. Loveable and extremely addictive, you couldn't ask for a better platform arcade game. ★★★★★

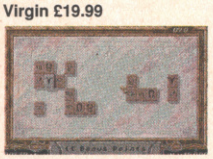
ROGUE TROOPER
Krisalis £24.99

Uppers – Fairly entertaining arcade adventure with devious but logical puzzles and an excellent free collectors' comic. ***Downers*** – One life – one mistake and you're all the way back to the start of the first level (Aaarrgh!) ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun for the persistent, and a good licence for a change. ★★

R-TYPE II
Activision £25.99

Uppers – 99.99% arcade-perfect, and a beautiful and addictive shoot-'em-up in its own right. ***Downers*** – A couple of tiny bugs, and maybe off-puttingly difficult. (For wimps, anyway). ***Bottom Line*** – The best space blast for the Amiga yet, and possibly the best coin-op conversion too. Absolutely superb. ★★★★★

SARAKON
Virgin £19.99



Uppers – Brilliant *Shanghai*-inspired gameplay, make this a strategy classic, and the price is a nice surprise. ***Downers*** – Slightly indistinct symbols can occasionally confuse matters. ***The Bottom Line*** – A supremely addictive puzzler, in the finest 'takes over your entire life' tradition. ★★★★

SEARCH FOR THE KING
Accolade £34.99

Uppers – Superb Elvis gags and attention to detail (particularly in the graphics) mean graphic adventure fans will take to it immediately. ***Downers*** – Accolade blow it to a certain extent with their inefficient parser system. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still a long way to go before it competes with the likes of *Monkey Island*. ★★★

SHANGHAI
Activision £19.99

Uppers – Based on an ancient Chinese tile game, so you know it's going to torture your mind, and it does. Friendly presentation too, and the multi-player against-the-clock games are action-packed enough for the most frenzied blasting fan. ***Downers*** – Slightly fiddly graphics can play havoc with your eyes. ***The Bottom Line*** – Scarily gripping for a game with no moving graphics. The first time you do it you'll want to take out an advert in The Times to tell everybody. ★★★★★

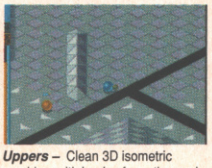
THE SIMPSONS
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A good licence AND a good game. Brilliant console-like scrolling arcade platform sort of thing. ***Downers*** – The main game doesn't really rely on the Simpsons theme, and a bit too complicated for Bart's younger fans. ***The Bottom Line*** – The licence of the year, probably. ★★★★★

SIRIUS 7
CRL £24.99

Uppers – Technically adequate. ***Downers*** – No thought, no imagination, no game, no fun. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost as action-packed as *Xenon 2*. In pause mode. ★

SLIDERS
Palace £25.99



Uppers – Clean 3D isometric graphics, with loads of sporting and *Marble Madness* overtones thrown in for good measure. ***Downers*** – The result is frankly less enjoyable than it sounds. ***The Bottom Line*** – Buy yourself *Spindizzy Worlds* or *Speedball 2* instead. ★★

SKI OR DIE
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – *Skate Or Die* but with snow. ***Downers*** – *Skate Or Die* but with snow. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun (for a while) with friends, but basically an old fashioned, patchy collection of unimpressive sub games. ★

SKULL AND CROSSBONES
Domark £24.99

Uppers – It's all reasonably true to the coin-op. ***Downers*** – Pity it was so crap then, isn't it? Appallingly slow, critically limited and bug-ridden. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'd have more fun being keelhauled. ★

SPEEDBALL II
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – The ultimate future sport game to date – fast, brutal, enormously playable. The Bitmaps' finest moment. ***Downers*** – Teams can be hard to tell apart in the heat of the action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Buy or die. ★★★★★

SPELLBOUND
Psyclapse £24.99

Uppers – Well-drawn backdrops, and, erm, the packaging is nice. ***Downers*** – Almost no in-game sound, practically nothing in the way of action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Hugely boring arcade adventure thing that's overpriced by £20. ★

SPINDIZZY WORLDS
Activision £24.99

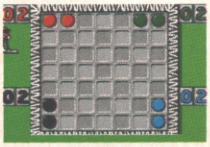
Uppers – Another example of an 8-bit classic brought bang up to date with a sprawling play area and loads of new features. ***Downers*** – Bizarre controls to get to grips with and the graphics could be better. ***The Bottom Line*** – Superlative game design, and total addiction. Frustrating as hell, but nonetheless a masterpiece. ★★★★★

SPIRIT OF EXCALIBUR
Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Plenty of variation, and it certainly all looks lovely. ***Downers*** – Pitifully slow, and the different sections don't really seem to gel together. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got a few hours to kill while

you're waiting for a train, this is a game that you can load up without fear of it causing you to miss it. (On the other hand, standing on the platform might be more fun). ★★

SPOT
Leisure Genius £25.99



Uppers – Brilliantly-designed Othello based board game which still manages to offer something new and different (and even supports up to four players). ***Downers*** – The presentation lacks polish in places. ***The Bottom Line*** – A class board-like strategy act. ★★★★★

STARGLIDER II
Rainbird £24.99

Uppers – Instant 3D blasting appeal, with extra depth for those who want it. ***Downers*** – Slightly too repetitive in the long-term. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still one of the best *Star Wars*-inspired releases on the Amiga. ★★★

STELLAR 7
Dynamix (Sierra) £24.99

Uppers – Appealingly old-fashioned blast from the past in the form of (yet another!) up-dated *Battlezone*. ***Downers*** – Ever-so-slightly sluggish vector graphics and optimistic pricing make it a bit of a luxury. ***The Bottom Line*** – Satisfyingly mindless – but that's both a strength and a weakness. ★★

STORMBALL
Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Reasonably passable graphics. ***Downers*** – Utterly dire game design, no feeling of speed or excitement, highly confusing and largely pointless. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you're looking for a good way to waste £25, throw it down a drain rather than buy this. ★

STRIKER MANAGER
D&H Games £24.99

Uppers – From the people who brought you *Football Director* (yes, that's its only good point). ***Downers*** – Statistic frenzy with absolutely no gameplay whatsoever. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could push the boundaries of computer games backwards by ten years. ★

STUN RUNNER
Tengen (Domark) £24.99

Uppers – Er...the music isn't entirely crap. ***Downers*** – Hopelessly slow, graphically primitive, plus there's a very terminal lack of excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – We'd rather see a great conversion of *Galaxians* than someone make a pig's ear of a game they knew they couldn't convert in the first place. ★

SUPER MONACO GP
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Well-programmed and fun. ***Downers*** – Bears very little resemblance to the coin-op. ***The Bottom Line*** – A very good racing game, but don't expect the arcade. ★★★

SUPER SKWEEK
Loriciel £19.99

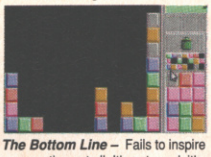
Uppers – Cute *Defusion/Painter*-based game with power-ups and add-ons galore. ***Downers*** – Perhaps a little to French for most of us. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could do with having another fiver chopped off the price, but otherwise great fun. ★★★

SUPER WONDER BOY
Activision £19.99

Uppers – Perfect difficulty curve lets you get just a little bit further every go. Cute graphics add to the charm and the shops where you can spend your gold give it a little extra scope. ***Downers*** – Slightly lacking in action, too slow for some. Not exactly modern looking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great game in the *Mario* vein, but with less enemies and more depth. ★★★

SWAP
Palace £25.99

Uppers – Interesting and new idea for a puzzle game, programmed perfectly competently. ***Downers*** – It just isn't captivating, and never rises above the averageness.



The Bottom Line – Fails to inspire any emotions at all. It's not good, it's not bad. It's just a bit bland. ★★

SWITCHBLADE II
Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – Gorgeous console-like graphics, tried-and-tested gameplay, packed full of detail and lovely touches. ***Downers*** – Perhaps just a little too simple. ***The Bottom Line*** – Absolutely superb. Arguably the best Amiga platform game to date. ★★★★★

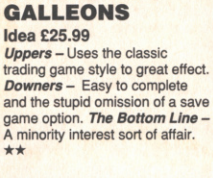
SWIV
Storm £24.99

Uppers – Looks good, sounds good, comes with a neat two-player option – and all in one (massive) level too! ***Downers*** – There aren't any (unless you find all those drab military-style colours a bit depressing). ***The Bottom Line*** – Frantic – one of the best shoot-'em-ups we've seen. ★★★★★

SWORDS AND GALLEONS
Idea £25.99

Uppers – Uses the classic trading game style to great effect. ***Downers*** – Easy to complete and the stupid omission of a save game option. ***The Bottom Line*** – A minority interest sort of affair. ★★

TANGRAM
Thalion £25.53



Uppers – Perfectly adequate computer translation of the classic Oriental puzzle. ***Downers*** – ...unfortunately it's a really dumb idea for a conversion, and the extras (time limit and suchlike) are intrusive and pointless. ***Bottom Line*** – Getting a real wooden Tangram set would be more fun, as well as much cheaper. ★

TETRIS
Infogrames £19.99

Uppers – Well, it is still *Tetris*. ***Downers*** – But it's probably the worst version yet seen on the Amiga, and that's saying something. ***The Bottom Line*** – Completely stinky. (Stick with the PD versions). ★

THEME PARK MYSTERY
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Great feel; looks and sounds lovely. ***Downers*** – Arcade sections are fairly pointless. ***The Bottom Line*** – Games which mix adventures with arcade sequences always suffer for it. ★★

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND
US Gold £25.99

Uppers – The closest thing yet to a fully interactive story. Enormous playability, pleasing puzzles and great dollops of – yes! – genuinely witty humour come together to form something very glorious indeed. ***Downers*** – Despite the five disks, you'll still need a full meg, and once the game is completed you'll probably never come back to it again. ***The Bottom Line*** – An adventure that looks and plays better than almost any arcade game. Software heaven.★★★★★

TEAM SUZUKI
Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Very fast, with some pretty hairy track views. Unintentionally hilarious replay feature. ***Downers*** – Insanely sensitive to control. ***The Bottom Line*** – Enough fun to keep you playing until you can at least stay on the road for five seconds at 60mph, but a bit too unrealistic to compete with *Indy 500*. ★★★

TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES
Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – It doesn't have the word 'Ninja' in the title...***Downers*** – ...but even that doesn't save it from being utterly awful in every way. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'd have more fun playing with a real turtle. Or a real mutant. ★

TERMINATOR 2
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – You get exactly what you'll be expecting – Another Ocean Movie Licence With Lots Of Sub-Games And No Depth. ***Downers*** – Only one of the sub-games has any real merit of its own, and the rest are even worse than the norm for this kind of thing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Pretty hopeless run-of-the-mill effort for real diehard Arnie fans only. ★★

TOKI
Ocean £25.39

Uppers – The (latest) definitive coin-op conversion. Beautiful

platform action to make you go ape. ***Downers*** – The sound is slightly disappointing, and the game is simply too small. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's there is brilliant, if only there was more of it. ★★★★★

TOTAL RECALL
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A fair bit of gameplay variation. ***Downers*** – Unfriendly controls, uninspired design. ***The Bottom Line*** – Solid but unexciting. No feel for the movie. (And couldn't they afford the rights to use Arnie's real face?) ★★

TOURNAMENT GOLF
Elite £24.99

Uppers – Authentic arcade port. ***Downers*** – Nobody ever played the arcade game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Completely average golfing yawnerama. ★★

TOWER FRA
Thalion £24.99

Uppers – Yes, you guessed it, it's an air traffic control tower simulation. Not as boring as it sounds. ***Downers*** – It's still fairly boring though. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good training for the next generation of air traffic controllers. ★★

3D CONSTRUCTION KIT
Domark/Incentive £49.99

Uppers – Creating your own games (or simply designing little worlds) is great fun. ***Downers*** – Well, it's not really a game as such, is it? It's pretty slow too, and making anything really worthwhile gets very complicated. ***The Bottom Line*** – Expensive and of limited appeal, but if you've always itched to create a Freescape game you can't really complain. ★★★

TURRICAN 2
Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Enjoyable mindless blasting. ***Downers*** – Erm, has there been some mistake here? Someone appears to have sent us a copy of *Turrican*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Better than the original, but that's the only way in which it's different. ★★★

ULTIMA V
Origin (Mindscape) £29.99

Uppers – The scope and depth of *Ultima V* goes way beyond other role-playing adventures, even previous *Ultima* releases. ***Downers*** – Not a bit of joystick action in sight; some may find the size of the game daunting. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Ultima V* offers arguably the best in graphic fantasy (at least until *Ultima VI* comes along). ★★★★★

UMS II
Rainbird (MicroProse) £34.99

Uppers – The pinnacle of tech-head wargames, with more user-definable bits than you could ever need. ***Downers*** – Atrocious documentation could mentally scar beginners for life. ***The Bottom Line*** – It won't win the wargaming fraternity any new members, but it'll put some in seventh heaven. ★★★

UTOPIA
Gremlin £29.99

Uppers – The appeal of this kind of city-building thing is timeless, and the war side gives it a new dimension. ***Downers*** – ...but neither side is particularly well-designed, and it can easily end up a touch on the dull side. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good game, but it needs a lot more depth to make it a true classic. ★★★★

VECTOR CHAMPIONSHIP RUN
Impulze £24.99

Uppers – Pretty speedy. ***Downers*** – Uncontrollable. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's the point of a game you can't play? (c.f. Rhetorical Questions For Journalists, Vol. 1) ★

VIZ
Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Very true to the comic. ***Downers*** – Very shallow and limited. The jokes only really work the first time you see them. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun while it lasts, but after the first couple of hours you've seen all it's got to offer. ★★

WARLOCK THE AVENGER
Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Playable and quite engrossing scrolling arcade adventure romp. ***Downers*** – An 8-bit game in 16-bit's clothing. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Druid* slightly updated for the 90s, and not by any stretch of the imagination worth £25. ★★

WARZONE
Core Design £20.99

Uppers – Graphics have a degree of character to them, and it's pretty tough. ***Downers*** – Adds very little to the hackneyed *Ikari Warriors* format. ***The Bottom Line*** – Competent but deadly dull shoot-'em-up that you've seen a dozen times before. ★★

WHITE SHARKS
Demonware £24.99

Uppers – Exceptionally good graphics, novel 'choose-your-own-power-ups' weapon system. ***Downers*** – Too fast to have any decent feel, and incredibly unimaginative. ***The Bottom Line*** – The game that put the 'bog standard' into 'bog standard shoot-'em-up'. Duff. ★★

WILDLIFE
MD Production £19.99

Uppers – Ideologically sound. ***Downers*** – *Operation Wolf* without shooting is like swimming without water. ***The Bottom Line*** – Utterly desperate. ★

WONDERLAND
Virgin £24.95

Uppers – An evocative telling of the classic Lewis Carrol tale utilising a pretty advanced user-interface. ***Downers*** – Unless you've got a very powerful Amiga with a screen that can handle interlace, the whole thing is very unwieldy. It's not got the best parser in the world either. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but after all the hype the product is something of a let-down. Not a patch on *Monkey Island*. ★★★

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SOCCER
Elite £24.99

Uppers – Very good copy of the coin-op (sob). ***Downers*** – Poor playability, you never get two seconds on the ball. ***The Bottom Line*** – Knocked out in the first round. ★★

WRATH OF THE DEMON
Readysoft £29.99

Uppers – Cheaper than *Shadow Of The Beast II*. ***Downers*** – Almost exactly the same in every other respect, even down to inclusion of a spiffing intro sequence. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you liked *S.O.T.B.II* you'll already have bought it, so you won't need this. Otherwise a good alternative. ★★

WRECKERS
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Some refreshing game ideas add a new angle to the old 'aliens-overrun-space station' story. ***Downers*** – The whole thing feels far too much like an 8-bit game. ***The Bottom Line*** – All the elements of a good game are there – they just haven't been tied together properly. ★★

XIPHOS
Electronic Zoo £24.99

Uppers – Silky smooth and subtle. ***Downers*** – Takes far too long to get into the action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Only for the dedicated space trader. ★★

ZARATHRUSTA
Hewson £24.99

Uppers – The *Thrust* gameplay is timeless, and it's been updated with 1990s graphics, resulting in something very special indeed. ***Downers*** – At heart though, it's still a game that used to sell for £1.99 going for £25, which isn't a bargain in anyone's language. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun, but to be honest, not really very good value. ★★★

ZIRIAX
The Software Business £24.99

Uppers – Pretty *Scramble* variant. ***Downers*** – Seriously overloaded in the difficulty department. ***The Bottom Line*** – Stupidly difficult, too much for almost everyone. More suited to a budget release. ★★

Z-OUT
Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – A huge improvement on *X-Out*. ***Downers*** – The horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up with knobs on thing has already been done to death. ***The Bottom Line*** – A better *R-Type* than *R-Type*, but it isn't different enough to make it stand out from the crowd. ★★★

AMEAGRE PRICES FOR AMIGA USERS

GAME	PRICE
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3D Pool	£7.95
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Cruise For A Corpse	£16.96
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Darkman	£15.96
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Full Blast (Comp)	£18.95
Gauntlet II	£6.70
Gauntlet III	£15.96
Geisha	£15.96
Gods	£15.96

GAME	PRICE
Golden Axe	£15.96
Grandstand (Comp)	£18.95
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Magnetic Scrolls Collection (Comp)	£18.95
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Mega-Lo-Mania	£18.95
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Mercs	£15.96
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Midnight Resistance	£15.96
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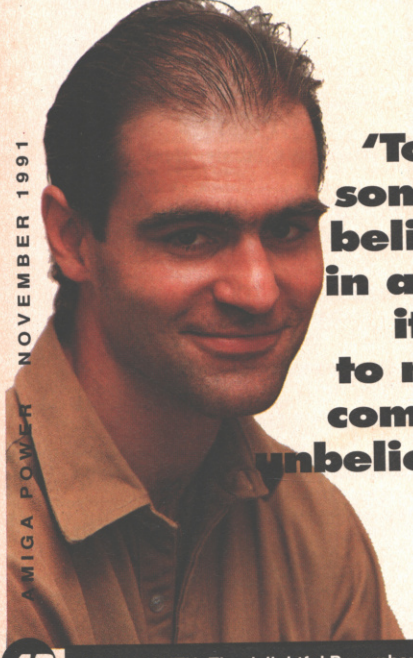
2ND opinion

RICHARD YAPP OF O.D.E

Objective, honest and informed as all AMIGA POWER reviews are intended to be, we admit it's sometimes nice to get a second opinion on things – after all, no two people ever fully agree about anything, and that's certainly true as far as games are concerned. That's why we're occasionally getting what we like to think of as 'top industry professionals' to sit here and spout off about other people's games, tell us what they like, and where their colleagues went wrong...

Richard Yapp started out programming for the C64, but after working on a number of ambitious (but not particularly successful) projects ranging from *Macbeth* for Creative Sparks (a text-based adventure based on the story of the play) to *Time* (one of Empire's less successful early Amiga releases), he turned his hand to production management. At Oxford Digital Enterprises he oversees the development of most of Empire's games, where they recently completed the coin-op conversion *Volfied*, and are currently involved in the final stages of *Deathbringer* and *Eye Of The Storm*. His biggest success to date has been *Trivial Pursuit* for Domark: "We did 91 versions in all, if you count all the different configurations for each machine, and the different languages." All well and good, but what does he think of other people's games?

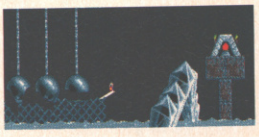


'To make something believable in a game, it's best to make it completely unbelievable'

LEMMINGS
Psygnosis

I didn't get into this at all. I felt that, far from being original, it was just following on from what Bullfrog did with *Populous*. Once again you're controlling the destiny of lots of little people, except with *Lemmings* you just have to stick one character in the way of an obvious danger, or whatever, in order to save the others. To be honest, I'd rather just blow the whole lot of 'em up – I think there are plenty of other games which are just as addictive as *Lemmings*, but don't have the advantage of the hype or the cute little characters.

One important thing about these sorts of games is that you really have to enjoy watching and playing around with the characters, and I really couldn't get used to – or care less about – little blue people with green hair.



***Lemmings* from Psygnosis**

The thing about *Lemmings* is that it was so immediate for many people – they really loved it after about ten minutes of play, whereas I didn't, and I didn't want to give much more time to it. Perhaps I should have – it might have hidden depths of which I'm unaware.

PRO TENNIS TOUR
Ubi Soft

I play a lot of sports sims but *Tennis Tour*'s my favourite. It had such a superb control mechanism that you tend to forget about the joystick and hardware, and you feel like you're actually serving the ball. You have so much control over the ball that the simulation element is almost forgotten. It's a nice feeling to lose yourself in something like that.

I also like to play golf simulations, but I'm still waiting for one that's really special. *PGA Gold Tour* was good looking but I didn't like the control. There was *Leaderboard* too, of course, but that's so old, and it's been copied so many times.

I loved *TV Sports Football*, and I don't know why. At first I thought it was just flash, but after learning all the moves, it becomes really engrossing.

I know a lot of people talk about *Kick Off* too, but I found the first one too unweildy. I was running too fast for the ball, and never really perfected control. *Kick Off II* got over that, and in many respects lived up to the publicity. For me though, the best soccer game is still *International Soccer Challenge* for the C64 which is very old, but still just beautiful.

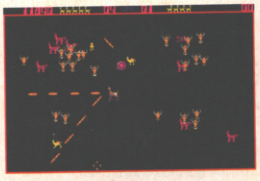
TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES
Mirrorsoft

Image Works' *Mutant Ninja Turtles*

There are some games that just don't live up to expectations, and this is one of them. It's always the same at Christmas. A couple of years ago we had *Afterburner* which could never have lived up to the standards set by the arcade machine, and didn't. *OutRun* was another Christmas number one that came in for a lot of criticism, but for once I don't think it was nearly so bad as people make out. Think about it – it could have been a good deal worse.

LLAMATRON
Llamasoft

We all play it around the office, because it's such simple fun. I think there's still a lot of room for mindless blast-'em-ups, and it's no bad thing to get rid of your aggression like that. It's a bit like having a game of squash, really – you're just unwinding in a harmless way. I wouldn't say that this is a good game as such – it's too simplistic in every way – but it does serve its purpose, even for someone like me who would usually go for a game with a bit more substance.



Jeff Minter's *Llamatron*

OPERATION WOLF
Ocean

The thing about *Llamatron* is that it's totally detached from reality. There's no fix in the real world, which I believe is important. *Operation Wolf*, and all in its genre, are disturbing because they attempt to emulate what goes on in real life, presenting real-life violence in a glamourous fashion. It's one thing killing aliens, but it's something else to...(*At this point Richard loses his thread a bit, but you get the general idea- Ed*).

FAERYTALE ADVENTURE
Microlllusions

This was one of the first games ever for the Amiga, and it's still my favourite. It cost £55, and came on one disk, but it was worth every penny. I like games that involve exploration and puzzles, and this is full of all that, and has some great atmosphere. The music is especially pleasing because it reacts to the gameplay. For instance, when the skeletons attack you, the music goes all spooky, and the game is totally seamless like that. You can lose yourself in it completely. There's none of that disk changing, or hanging around for ages for the disk to access, either. You're forever finding new areas of the game.

Microlllusions' ancient *Faerytale*

PRINCE OF PERSIA
Broderbund (Domark)

This showed just how far you can go with animation using little more than a few pixels. If you look at the background of the game, it's really quite bland, but the character movement is something special. Despite what everyone says, they haven't actually tried to emulate real movement, they've emphasised and exaggerated it in a cartoony way, and that works. In the '30s and '40s, when Disney was getting big, they tried to get human animation right by filming people, and then drawing over them. But the results were bland. You have to exaggerate movement to make a cartoon special, and it's the same with computer games.

It's no good trying to emulate what the camera does, or what you see in real life – that's not what the computer is good at. You have to make it theatrical, like in *Prince of Persia*. I know it sounds like I'm contradicting myself, but to make something believable in a game, it's best to make it completely unbelievable. ●

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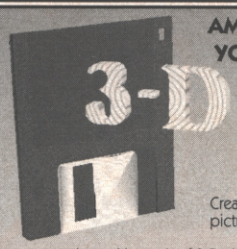

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